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THE

ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR:

ITS

FESTIVALS AND HOLY SEASONS,

By Rev. B. G. BAYERLE,

RECTOR OF PEMPLEFORT, NEAR COLOGNE, GERMANY.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED THE LEGENDS

OR

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS,

BY

REV. DR. ALBAN STOLZ.

A HOUSEHOLD WORK FOR INSTRUCTION AND DEVOTION.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

REV. THEODORE NOETHEN,

PASTOR OF "HOLY CROSS," ALBANY, N. Y.

Published under the Approbation of Sixteen American Prelates.

Divine Providence has given in our days a great mission to the Catholic press. It is her duty to preserve the principles of order and of faith where they still exist, and to draw them forth from the obscurity, to which impiety or religious indifference may have consigned them.

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THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR:

OR

FESTIVALS AND HOLY SEASONS.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

"Veneration of the Saints."

THE most evident and glorious proof of the truth and divinity of the Catholic Church, is doubtless the fact, established in a manifold manner from her origin, that she has produced Saints; that is, that many of her members have after their death obtained possession of heaven. That such is really the case, has been confirmed by undeniable evidence, and by the wonders of divine Omnipotence. The sanctity of so many of her members is the strongest proof of the sanctity of the Church herself, and it is therefore very natural, that the Catholic Church alone (the only one founded by Christ Himself), is enabled to produce such living fruits of sanctity, since only to the true Church can the eternal truth give such testimony, confirmed by the wonders of His Omnipotence. At the same time it is an established fact, that, out of the pale of the Catholic Church, there is no community which ever could or ever will be able to establish the beatitude of even one of its deceased members.

The sanctity of so many departed members of the Catholic Church is a matter of consolation and a cause of joy to us, children of that Church. The relation in which we, who still belong to the Church militant upon earth, stand to the Saints, who already belong to the Church triumphant in heaven, and which we call in ecclesiastical language: COMMUNION OF SAINTS, avails to our own salvation, so that in truth the communion and veneration of the Saints constitute one of the most beautiful and the most sublime doctrines of our whole religion. If this is so, it is no wonder that the veneration of the Saints in the Catholic Church is attacked in various ways by her opponents. The most grievous charges, and not unfrequently absurd objections are made by Protestants and infidels. Some reproachingly say, that the Catholic Church considers certain deceased persons as Saints, or as they sneeringly express themselves, that she makes Saints, when no one can be certain in regard to the sanctity of a person but the Omniscient God; others declare the veneration of the Saints, their invocation, and the veneration of their relics and images to be a superstitious

and absurd practice, idolatrous and derogatory to the honor due to God Himself, and hence reject the whole as an unchristian doctrine.

In representing, therefore, the lives of the Saints, who came forth from the Catholic Church, and who are venerated by her, it may not be superfluous, but rather judicious to explain the veneration of the Saints as existing in the Catholic Church, in its principal points, and to show that the veneration is in no way absurd, superstitious, or idolatrous, but on the contrary is perfectly consonant not only with the demands of reason, but also with religion, the express dispositions of God, and therefore with His own veneration. To this end we have to consider:

1. How can we be certain of the sanctity of a departed soul, or what proceedings are taken in the Catholic Church prior to a canonization?

2. What constitutes the veneration, and upon what grounds is it founded?

II.

1. THE CANONIZATIONS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

By canonization is generally understood, the solemnly expressed declaration of the Church, after a strict and conscientious investigation, that a certain deceased person distinguished himself by his holy life and death, that his sanctity has been proved by Almighty God Himself by means of authentic wonders, that he is therefore with certainty numbered among the Saints of God, and is in possession of eternal happiness, and that he may justly be venerated by the faithful who are still living upon earth. The process is divided into BEATIFICATION and CANONIZATION in the strictest sense. In the earlier times of Christianity, these did not differ from each other, but in course of time the present form has been adopted.

In order to proceed to a canonization with the utmost certainty, and to avoid all possible error, even in the earliest times of Christianity, the acts of the life and death of the martyrs, who suffered for the faith, were carefully collected, and that these might be drawn with due order and care, officers called NOTARIES were appointed, whose duty it was to commit to writing the acts and virtues of the martyrs. These official statements formed the basis for the canonization. In the first part of the third century, deacons were added to these notaries, in order to collect the acts of the martyrs written by the notaries, which afterwards were read in the churches, in order to strengthen the zeal of the faithful.

From these collections of the acts of the martyrs the present martyrologies of the Catholic Church have their origin.

It was, however, not enough to have suffered martyrdom, in order to be admitted into the martyrology; many thousands were put to death in the times of persecution by the enemies of Christianity, without their being entitled to be venerated by the faithful as holy martyrs. St. Augustine says: "The punishment of death does not constitute martyrdom, but the REASON for which it is suffered." Above all, it had to be proved, that the deceased suffered death for the faith, and out of pure love to God; and that no vain glory, no desire after worldly honor, and least of all, that no accident or crime had been the cause of his death. The following words of St. Paul were taken into special consideration: "If I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Cor. 13 : 3.) It was for this reason, that the lives and the virtues of the martyrs were carefully examined, and when it was proved that the life of the deceased had not been in conformity with the precepts of the Gospel, no canonization took place. The life of one who had been converted from Judaism or Paganism, if he was to be venerated as a martyr, must from the time of conversion, be entirely pure and holy. There are, however, examples of the canonization of some, who in former years had not led an exemplary life, but who by a heroic death made amendment for their sins, or who were suddenly and miraculously converted. The deceased, moreover, must show himself worthy of veneration, and hence children dying immediately after baptism, although undoubtedly in heaven, are not venerated as Saints, because they attained it by no merit of their own. The only exception made, is in the case of such children as have been put to death for the name of Jesus, because the martyrdom which they suffered supplied the necessary merit, as was the case with the holy Innocents. Besides the holy life and death of a person, a confirmation of his true sanctity by God Himself, shown by undeniable wonders performed after the martyr's death through his intercession, were required for his canonization. Some of the most distinguished Fathers of the Church were always of the opinion, that a holy life and a death suffered for the true faith were sufficient even without the evidence of miracles, to acknowledge and venerate a deceased person as a Saint. The chief pastors of the Church, however, have always acted in such a momentous affair with the greatest strictness and conscientiousness, and have required too much rather than too little security in so important a step as canonization. We find, therefore, in the documents of the canonization of a martyr, even in the earliest times of Christianity, the miracles enumerated, which took place after his death through his intercession, either at his grave or by means of his relics, or in some other manner, whereby his sanctity was confirmed by Almighty God Himself. But few instances of canonization are found in which some miracles were not noted down together with the holy life and death of the martyr.

Now, as soon as the real sanctity of a martyr was thus sufficiently proved, he was entered by the bishop, to whose diocese he belonged, in the Martyrology, and recommended for veneration to the faithful of the diocese. This decree of the bishop in regard to a martyr who was to be venerated as a Saint, was called BEATIFICATION, according to which the person in question was first recognized and venerated as a Saint only in his own diocese. If any one expressed the wish to have the martyr entered in the general Martyrology and venerated by the whole Church, the bishop then sent the entire process of the canonization of the Saint to the Pope, the chief Pastor of the Church, begging him to confirm the decree made by him, the bishop, and to recommend the veneration of the Saint in question to all the faithful. The documents were then carefully examined by the Pope and persons appointed by him, and when the documents were found to be genuine and well authenticated, the name of the martyr was entered in the general Martyrology by the Pope, and his veneration declared to the whole Church. This last proceeding constituted the canonization.

During the three first centuries, in which the Catholic Church was persecuted almost without intermission by the pagans, martyrdom for the Christian faith was, as the most glorious proof of heroic fidelity to the Church, naturally required as a necessary condition for the canonization of a deceased person; but after the persecution ceased, in the fourth century, the veneration of CONFESSORS commenced, that is of those persons, who had led a holy life, and had during their life confessed their faith truly and firmly in word and deed, although they had not suffered martyrdom. First of all, however, were venerated those holy confessors, who lived either in the time of the Apostles or immediately after them, and without having suffered martyrdom proved themselves worthy of veneration by their pure and holy lives. The first confessor who was thus publicly venerated in the Church, after the persecution against the Church had ceased, was, it is said, St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, in France, who died about the year four hundred, and whose festival is celebrated on the eleventh of November. If the proceedings at the canonization of the martyrs, of those faithful heroes of the faith, who for the honor of God sacrificed their lives, were conducted with such care and strictness, it will be easily imagined, that at the canonization of a confessor even greater caution and strictness were used. In proof of his virtuous and holy life and death, several authenticated and well-known miracles, which happened through his intercession after his death, had to be established. In this sense the great Pope Innocent III., who lived in the twelfth century, thus writes in the bull of canonization of St. Homobonus: "Although according to the testimony of the eternal truth, a happy death only is necessary to obtain sanctity in the Church triumphant—for the Holy Scriptures say: 'He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved,' (Matt. 10 : 22.)—two things are still necessary in order to be venerated as a Saint in the Church militant, *the splendor of*

morals, and *the splendor of miracles; works of virtue in life, and works of wonder after death.* For as an angel of Satan often appears as an angel of light, and because many do good works only to be seen by men, and others shine through apparent miracles, whose deeds however are wicked, as did the magicians of Pharao, and as it is said of Antichrist, that he will if possible deceive even the elect by pretended miracles, none of these three requisites alone, is sufficient to prove sanctity, but only when a holy life has preceded death, and miracles follow thereafter; these facts together will give proof of true holiness."

The proceedings for beatification and canonization take place a long time after the death of the person. At least fifty years must elapse. Those however were excepted, who in their lives had already distinguished themselves by great sanctity and extraordinary merits, and who after their death were especially glorified by innumerable and astonishing miracles, as was the case with St. Bernard, St. Francis of Assisium, St. Dominic, St. Elizabeth, and many others. These Saints were canonized only a few years after their death, although in such cases also the utmost care and strictness were observed. When the relatives of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, whose holy life and death had been crowned with more than thirty miracles, asked for her beatification, Pope Gregory XI. did not at once consent, but said, that all is not gold that glitters, and in order to dispel the doubts of the suspicious, he commissioned the Archbishop of Mentz and several other venerable and trustworthy men, to collect all public and other proofs of whatever in the life of this renowned princess had been pleasing to God and man, and to report in regard to the miracles which happened after her death. He also gave most careful and conscientious directions for the examination of the witnesses. Meanwhile the Archbishop of Mentz died, and the Pope appointed the Bishop of Hildesheim to continue the examination in the same manner; and only, when all the statements in regard to the life, death, and miracles of St. Elizabeth had been clearly proved by many witnesses, and when the Pope himself had most carefully examined the reported miracles, was the beatification of the Saint decreed.

The rite, or the proceedings at beatifications and canonizations were not always the same in the outward ceremonies: in the first centuries, especially at the beatifications, which ceremony every bishop could perform for his diocese, the rite was very simple; afterwards, however, a solemn rite was used for such an important act. The first Saint, solemnly canonized by a Pope, was St. Udalric, Bishop of Augsburgh in Bavaria, who died in the year nine hundred and seventy-three, and who was added by Pope John XV. at the Lateran Council to the number of the Saints, and entered upon the Martyrology.

The right of the Bishops to beatify within their dioceses, continued until the end of the twelfth century, at which time (in the year eleven hundred and seventy), by a decree of Pope Alexander III., beatifications were reserved exclusively to the Holy See, principally for the reason, that all doubts might be

removed, as to whether any fraud or error had been committed in the proceedings. Beatifications were made, until the middle of the seventeenth century, without any celebration even in the Church, but simply, and without special ceremonies, until Pope Alexander VII. decreed that they should be performed in the Vatican, with solemnity and pomp. The first saint who was solemnly beatified was Francis de Sales, the renowned Prince-Bishop of Geneva, beatified by Pope Alexander VII., in the year sixteen hundred and sixty-two, and at a later period also canonized.

Both the acts of beatification and canonization, although examined by the Pope himself, were always, in former times, after a previous consultation with authorized persons, submitted to the councils, general or provincial, or if they could not be held, to Cardinal-Bishops, until Pope Sixtus V., towards the end of the sixteenth century, appointed a special congregation of Cardinals, called the CONGREGATION OF RITES, which, besides other functions, is obliged to transact all business relating to the forms of beatification and canonization. Of the difference between beatification and canonization and the mutual relation of these two acts, the following may be said: BEATIFICATION is as it were a preparatory act to the CANONIZATION, and consists in the Pope declaring that certain deceased persons whose lives and death as well as the miracles performed through their intercession, had been carefully examined, could be venerated as BLESSED in certain places, where they had lived and labored, or where their relics were preserved, or by certain persons, or in case of a religious, by the order to which he belonged. By the beatification the veneration of a deceased person is allowed only within certain limits; he is not called SAINT (sanctus) but only BLESSED (beatus); without a special permission from the Pope, no altar can be dedicated to him, nor can his likeness be set up in a church. At the canonization, on the contrary, the servant of God receives the title SAINT (sanctus), and as such is venerated by the whole Church; his name is entered in the Calendar, and according to circumstances, also in the litanies and other public prayers; he is publicly invoked at the solemn service of the Church, the holy sacrifice of the Mass is offered up in his honor, the day of his death is celebrated, provided the Pope does not appoint another day for the commemoration of his death, churches and altars are dedicated under his invocation, his picture or statue is placed in the Church for veneration, and his relics also are kept in the churches, and carried around in solemn procession for public veneration.

The process of canonization is as follows: As soon as the beatification is desired, the petition, together with the acts (containing the examinations of his life, death, and miracles) are sealed and sent by the Bishop of the diocese in which the deceased had lived or is buried, or where the miracles took place, to the congregation of rites in Rome, where they are opened and examined as soon as the Pope has chosen a Cardinal to report upon them. This congregation is divided into four classes, and in each of them are the testimo-

nies regarding the sanctity of the deceased examined with the greatest care and strictness. If the acts are found to be authentic and in proper form, the papers of the deceased, if he left any, are examined by approved theologians. On their decision it depends whether the process is to be continued or stayed forever.

Ten years after the acts have been sent by the bishop, the petitioners may renew their request, and with the permission of the Pope, a strict examination in regard to the proofs of the sanctity of the deceased is renewed. The miracles especially, the proper confirmation through God Himself of the sanctity of the deceased, are closely investigated. The confirmation of authentic witnesses in regard to striking and extraordinary events is not sufficient, but the most learned men of every profession, lawyers, naturalists, physicians, linguists and others are invited to attend the meetings of the congregation, to examine in every possible manner the miracles in question and to raise all possible objections to their divine origin, so that it can be ascertained whether they may indeed be considered as true miracles. Besides, all those who offer objections against the sanctity and the pretended miracles of the deceased, are admitted and heard, and one of the officers of the congregation, who has for that reason received the title of Advocatus diaboli (the devil's lawyer) receives special orders to bring forth any objection against the sanctity of the deceased, to attack the authenticity of the miracles, and to render the beatification as difficult as possible, so that not the slightest doubt is left about it. At least two miracles must be proved beyond all question, in order to commence the proceedings for beatification; and when this is done, the Pope hears the opinion of the congregation, who having finished their strict examinations, unanimously declare themselves in favor of commencing the proceedings for beatification; he then orders prayers to be said, and announces, if he thinks fit, his determination to commence the beatification, appoints the day and the place where it shall take place, and charges the secretary of the congregation with the execution of the brief, which the sovereign Pontiff issues on the occasion.

If after the beatification of the deceased new miracles are performed through his intercession, if the bishop testifies to the continuance of the veneration of the people towards the Blessed, if both clergy and laity second the request of the petitioners for the canonization, the congregation accepts the petition, and commences the process of canonization. Two miracles, which happened after the beatification of the person in question, must be proved, and an examination of them and of all new testimonies for his holiness is made, as at the beatification.

As soon as the Holy See has determined to commence the canonization, it is acted upon in three different sessions. The first session is a secret one, and consists of all the cardinals, the Pope presiding. The secretary communicates to all present a short printed biography of the Blessed who is to

be canonized; then the president of the congregation of rites makes a verbal report, and the cardinals give in their votes. The second session is public, and attended not only by the cardinals and all the bishops present in Rome, but by the ambassadors of foreign courts, the officers of the congregation of rites, and others who are invited to attend. An advocate delivers before the assemblage a eulogy upon the person to be canonized. The third session consists of cardinals and bishops, then present in Rome, each of whom has communicated to the Holy Father his opinion, explaining in few words the reasons for canonization. The Pope appoints the day and the church, in which this solemn act of canonization is to take place—which after a magnificent procession to the church, is celebrated with great splendor; after repeating the petition for canonization, and different prayers and chants, the canonization by the Pope follows, which is then recorded. The TE DEUM LAUDAMUS is sung, and the Pope celebrates a solemn Mass in honor of the new Saint. Sometimes too a sermon is delivered on the occasion. The papal decree of a canonization is as follows:

"In honor of the holy and undivided Trinity, for the glory of the Catholic faith, and the increase of the Christian religion, in virtue of the absolute power of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and of our own, after previous and mature consideration, and having repeatedly implored the divine assistance, in accordance with the advice of our venerable brethren, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, of the Patriarchs, the Archbishops and Bishops, who are now present in the city of Rome, we canonize blessed (venerable) N. N., enter him on the list of the Saints, and decree that his memory be devoutly celebrated in the whole Church on his birthday, the ———

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*"

In conclusion, we will mention some historical facts, in order to show how strictly the Church acts in examining miracles, as the most important proofs of the sanctity of the deceased. Blessed Nicholas von den Flue, who lived in the fifteenth century in Switzerland, took for twenty years no nourishment of any kind, except the Holy Eucharist, which he received once a month. This fact is proved beyond all doubt, for according to a public decree of the commune, Nicholas was watched for a whole month by a large number of men, to test the truth of the report of his extraordinary fast; but they found no deception whatever. Burkhard of Horneck, the physician of archduke Sigismund, examined him thoroughly and confirmed the fact. Germanus, the prince-bishop of Constance, commissioned Thomas, his suffragan, to investigate the remarkable circumstance. Having conversed with Blessed Nicholas about spiritual things, Thomas finally asked him which virtue he considered the most pleasing before God. Nicholas answered: "Obedience." Thereupon the Bishop smilingly took from his pocket a piece of bread and a small bottle of wine, saying: "See, my brother, here is bread and wine, which obedience puts before you; take, eat and drink, that you

may receive in heaven the reward of your obedience." The servant of God obeyed most willingly, and ate a little bread and drank a few drops of wine; but he was at once seized with violent cramps in the stomach, so that the Bishop was alarmed, and asked his forgiveness for having tempted him. Otto, count of Sonnenberg, successor to the Prince-bishop of Constance, confirmed as eye-witness the remarkable fact of the twenty years fast of Blessed Nicholas. Even John von Muller, one of the greatest historians, a Protestant, says in relation to Blessed Nicholas: "It was examined while he was living, it was reported everywhere, it has been transmitted by his cotemporaries to posterity, and even after the reformation it was credited as a fact, that Brother Nicholas lived twenty years in his cell without taking any other food than the Holy Communion, which he received once a month."

Who would not consider such a long fast to be miraculous? Most men will consider it as such, who hear of this extraordinary fact; but the Roman court declared this fast of twenty years to be no miracle by which the sanctity of Blessed Nicholas could be established; for according to the examinations it could not be proved, whether the fast had been the result of free will or of bodily disease; for when Blessed Nicholas retired into solitude, there to devote the rest of his days to the service of God and the salvation of his soul, a deep sleep befell him while saying his night-prayers, and he thought that he beheld a bright light over him, after which he experienced violent pains in his stomach; he felt as if some one had run a knife into his body and cut out his bowels. From that hour (1467), until his death, in the year 1487, he took no nourishment at all, nor did he feel hungry or thirsty during that time. It was therefore possible, that this long fast might be the result of bodily disease, and for this reason the miracle was declared doubtful, although even if such had been the case, it was very wonderful how he could abstain from all food for such a length of time.

Another instance of the great strictness practiced by the Roman court at the examination of alleged miracles, and at the confirmation of them for canonization, is related by Father Daubenton, the author of the biography of St. Francis Regis. An English nobleman, a Protestant, who had gone to Rome, expressed there some preconceived opinions, especially regarding the proceedings of the Church at canonizations, and at the examination of miracles, upon the authenticity of which, canonizations are based. A Roman Prelate, in order to refute his objections, gave him the proceedings of the sacred congregation to read, which contained the evidence of several such miracles. The nobleman read the document with much interest, and returning the same to the prelate, said: "This is the safest way to prove miracles; if all the miracles believed in the Catholic Church were founded on such evidence, we could accept them all, and the Church would not be exposed to ridicule by pretended miracles." "Well," replied the Prelate, "what will you say, when I tell you that not one

of all these miracles, which appear to be verified and well founded, has been accepted as proven by the sacred congregation of rites, because according to our judgment, the evidence was not satisfactory." The Protestant, astonished at such an answer, confessed that blind prejudice only, could oppose the canonization of the Saints, and he acknowledged that he had never imagined that such precautions were taken by the Roman Church.

We see then, that the Catholic Church acts with great prudence and strictness in the matter of canonization, and that we may therefore safely consider and venerate as holy and glorified, those servants of God whom the Church has canonized.

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2. THE VENERATION OF THE SAINTS.

THE veneration of the Saints, as existing in the Catholic Church, is divided into the following parts:

1. The veneration of the Saints.
2. The invocation of the Saints.
3. The veneration of their relics.
4. The veneration of their images.
5. The imitation of the Saints.

III.

1. VENERATION OF THE SAINTS.

IT is only natural, that those servants of God, who when living upon earth proved themselves worthy, by a virtuous life, by laboring for the honor of God and the welfare of their neighbors, and by faithfully persevering in the service of the Lord, should, after being admitted into eternal glory, be venerated by us. We honor, and most justly, those who, although still living upon earth, prove themselves worthy of that honor by endeavoring to attain virtue and perfection, by avoiding sin and injustice, by laboring for the honor of God and by loving truly and disinterestedly their neighbors;—how much more then do not those deserve our veneration, who have persevered until the end in virtue, who have triumphantly overcome all evil, for which God Himself esteems and loves them,

and who now, elevated above all human frailty, have been found worthy as glorified friends of God to see Him face to face, and to participate in His happiness.

We justly venerate above all other Saints the BLESSED VIRGIN, whom God has distinguished by selecting her to be the Mother of His only-begotten Son—Mary, the Mother of Christ, who could call the Son of the heavenly Father her Son, by whom she was most tenderly loved and venerated, and who has proved herself to be the Mother and protectress of all Christians, and who filled with the Holy Ghost, prophesied that she should be venerated by all true Christians, saying: "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed!"

In the same manner and with the same justice do we venerate also those pure and holy spirits, who having been found true in time of trial, are now gathered around the throne of God to praise and adore Him:

THE HOLY ANGELS, who also, as history tells us, have given and still give to the children of this earth many proofs of their love and care. We venerate also

THE HOLY APOSTLES AND DISCIPLES OF OUR LORD, those men whom our Saviour Himself chose to be His assistants and successors in the reparation and propagation of the divine kingdom upon earth, who have spread throughout the whole world the blessings of Christianity, and whom our Saviour called not His servants, but His FRIENDS. We justly venerate also

THE HOLY MARTYRS, who with the greatest perseverance and patience endured the most horrible torments for the name of Jesus, and who sacrificed their lives for the kingdom of God.

THE HOLY CONFESSORS, who according to the precept of Christ firmly confessed their faith in life, who renounced the world and its pleasures, and who directed their whole efforts to the kingdom of God.

THE HOLY VIRGINS, who in the midst of a wicked world and surrounded by dangers and temptations of every kind, preserved unstained their purity and innocence, and who have kept until their blessed death the fidelity which they had promised to their heavenly bridegroom. We venerate

ALL THOSE, in any state of life, whether clerical or secular, poor or rich, high or low, who have faithfully served God, loved and worshipped Him above all things, who have fulfilled their obligations and duties, and crowned their virtuous life with a holy death. The Almighty in the old law has said: "Whosoever shall glorify me, him will I glorify," (1 Kings 2 : 30,) and in the same sense Christ says: "If any man minister to me, let him follow me, and where I am, there also shall my minister be. If any man minister to me, him will my Father honor." (John 12 : 26.)

The veneration of the Saints, therefore, as practiced in the Catholic Church, does not derogate in the least from the veneration due to God Himself (as the enemies of our holy religion maintain); on the contrary it rather contributes to the greater veneration of God, for instead of WORSHIPPING the Saints, we only

VENERATE them as friends of God, on account of their sublime virtues, and for the sanctity by which they have attained heaven, and for which they are honored by Almighty God Himself; and such a veneration refers to God, the source of all virtues, to Him the most Holy, by whom they have attained holiness, so that, according to the royal prophet, "we praise and glorify God in His Saints."

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2. THE INVOCATION OF THE SAINTS.

THE invocation of the Saints, as practiced in the Catholic Church, is rejected by her enemies because, as they say, we can apply immediately to God Himself, the giver of all good things, to hear and help us, and it is therefore needless to call upon the Saints for their mediation or assistance. It is true, that in all our wants and difficulties we can direct our supplications immediately to God Himself, which is done by Catholics, as is proved by the many prayers used in our Church; but it does not argue that it is superfluous for us to call at the same time upon the Saints of God, not that they may help us by their own power, or may give us grace (for this God alone can do,) but that they, as friends of God, may give greater efficacy to our prayers by the aid of their powerful intercession, and obtain for us, from God, whatever we, as sinful men, are unworthy to receive. (The difference between the invocation of God and the saints can be seen in all the prayers of the Church, especially in the Litanies. In invoking God we say, according to the precept of the Church: "LORD, HEAR US, LORD HAVE MERCY ON US;" when invoking the Saints, however, we say: "Holy Mary, holy Peter, holy Paul, pray for us.")

The efficacy of the prayers of the just and holy servants of God for their fellow-beings, is clear from the scriptures, and to solicit their intercession is entirely in harmony with them; for St. James expressly says: "Pray one for another, that you may be saved; for the continual prayer of a just man availeth much." (James 5 : 16.) Besides this we find in the Old and New Testament many striking examples of the power of the prayer of just and godly men even in behalf of sinners. ABRAHAM the just man, prayed to God to spare the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, and the Lord Himself gave him the assurance, that upon his intercession He would spare the cities, if only ten just persons could be found therein. (Genesis 18.) MOSES, the great leader of the Israelites, when the people at different times rose in disobedience against God, and even when they had fallen into idolatry, and the Lord had commenced to punish them, appeased the anger of God by his intercession and averted the chastisement from them. (Exod. 32 : 33; Numbers 14 : 17, etc.) SAMUEL also obtained

by his prayers for the people, oppressed by the overwhelming power of their enemies, deliverance from great dangers and glorious victories over their enemies. (1 King 7 : 5.) By the prayer of the great prophet Elias, the son of the widow of Sarepta was raised to life again (3 Kings 17 ;) by the prayer of the same prophet a drought and famine of three years' duration, with which the Lord had punished the Israelites on account of their idolatry, was averted. (3 Kings 17 : 18.)' Of Jeremias the prophet it is said in the Holy Scriptures, even after his death: "Then Onias answering, said: This is a lover of his brethren, and of the people of Israel: this is he that prayeth much for the people and for all the holy city, Jeremias the prophet of God." (2 Machab. 15 : 14.) At the request of the Blessed Virgin Mary our Saviour wrought his first miracle at the wedding of Cana (John 2 : 3–9); at the petition of those who applied to Him with faith and confidence, and who asked him in behalf of others, as did the centurion of Capharnaum, the woman of Canaan and many others He helped the suffering. St. Paul recommended himself to the prayers of the Faithful, (Ephes. 6 : 18–19,) and he even asserts, that by his prayers to God, he saved the lives of two hundred and sixty-seven of his companions during a terrible storm at sea. (Acts 27.) Now, if after these and many other examples given in the Holy Scriptures, the prayers of the Just, even during their mortal lives upon earth possess such great power, and if God upon their intercession has been merciful to others, even to sinners, how much greater power must not their prayer possess, when free from the imperfections of this life, they stand as Saints and friends of God around His throne, seeing Him face to face, and are united with Him, the fountain of all grace, in everlasting bliss!

Can we suppose, that the Saints, separated from us only by a space, are not aware of our wants and desires, and have no knowledge of our condition? No, this we have no reason to fear.

"We can not admit," says the holy Pope Gregory the Great, "that anything is concealed from the knowledge of the Saints, since they behold the dazzling brightness of the Lord of creation." On the same subject, St. Augustine observes: "Could it be possible, that the Saints, when freed from the fetters of their body, should be in need of the eyes of the flesh in order to see, when Eliseus, although not present at the time, knew of the fraud practiced by his avaricious servant?" (4 Kings, 5 : 26.) Or should they not now, when clothed in the glory of heaven, have more love for us, than they ever had in their lifetime? or will their prayers be less acceptable now? Who would assert such a thing?" St. Jerome, in speaking on the efficacy of the intercession of the Saints, says: "If the Apostles and martyrs, while in their mortal bodies, and attending to their own salvation, could intercede for their fellow-creatures, how much more will they be able to do so for them, now that they are crowned as glorious victors? Moses alone obtained pardon from God for six hundred thousand warriors; Stephen, the follower of His Master, and the first martyr in

Christ, asked pardon for his murderers, and as he is now with Christ, should his prayers have less power and influence? St. Paul says, that by his prayers he saved two hundred and sixty-seven of his companions, who were with him at sea; should he now, that he is dissolved and united with Christ, keep silence as it were, and not speak for those who throughout the world believe in the Gospel which he preached?

Among the Saints, the Patron-Saints are especially venerated and invoked by those who recommend themselves to their protection, a practice which has existed from the earliest time of Christianity, and is founded upon certain sentences of the Holy Scriptures. We have already remarked, that the prophet Jeremias, even after his death, took special care of the Israelites and the city of Jerusalem, so that he could be considered as the patron of the people. (2 Machab. 15 : 14.) Every Christian has his Patron-Saint, whose name he has received in baptism; he should therefore show him special veneration, and confidently invoke his intercession; but at the same time, and what is by far more important, he should make him his model, and by imitating his virtues show himself worthy of his intercession, in order to follow him also into eternal glory. In the same manner, pious societies, confraternities, and associations have their Patron-Saints. Every church also receives at its dedication the name of some Saint, who is therefore called the Patron-Saint of the church—a practice which doubtless originated from the fact, that in the earliest times of Christianity the Churches were built over the tombs of the holy martyrs, and that the altars especially were erected over their relics; hence it is, that even now every altar must contain some relics of a Saint. Communities, cities, and even whole nations, have their tutelar or Patron-Saint.

The feasts of these Patron-Saints of churches (called patrocinia or patrons), are celebrated with great solemnity according to the rite of the highest festivals of the Church; they have an octave, and solemn processions are often held upon them.

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3. VENERATION OF THE RELICS OF THE SAINTS.

As the veneration of the Saints is founded in the natural feelings of man, so also is the veneration of their relics, that is of their bones or of any article belonging to them, which they may have used while in life. If every thing that belonged to a person who was dear to us in life, such as clothes, books, furniture, &c., becomes after his death almost sacred to us as having belonged to him;—how much more are such articles valued, if they have belonged to persons who, when alive, excelled others by reason of their admirable virtues, and thus proved

themselves worthy of special honor and veneration! To this, another reason may be added, why the BONES of the glorified Saints are an object of special veneration to the Catholics. According to the Holy Scriptures, the body of the Christian is a temple of the Holy Ghost, (1 Cor. 3 : 16–19; 2 Cor. 6 : 16.) sanctified through the grace of God. Although a prey to death and corruption for a time, it will not remain always in death, but will rise on the last day, be united again with the soul, and will live for ever; therefore the bodies of the just shall be glorified and shall become like the glorified body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For this reason the Catholic justly venerates the bones of the Saints as parts of that temple, in which the Saint lived so piously, as the instruments with which he labored so successfully, and with which he so perseveringly combated for the kingdom of God, as parts of that body which shall one day gloriously rise, and which united with the soul shall live in eternal happiness.

The veneration of the relics of the Saints is founded also upon the express words of the Holy Scriptures. The Israelites in the old law already preserved the bones of Joseph, their greatest benefactor, and, according to his wish, carried them with them after the Exodus from Egypt into the land of promise. (Gen. 50 : 24; Exod. 13 : 19.) God Himself was pleased with the veneration paid to the relics of the Saints, as through them He has wrought many miracles. Thus it is said in the Holy Scriptures, that a dead man by being touched with the bones of the prophet Eliseus, was again restored to life; (4 Kings 13 : 21.) that by merely touching the garments of Christ, a woman who was sick for many years, was instantly made whole; (Matt. 9 : 22; Mark 5 : 22; Luke 8 : 20.) and that even by the shadow of St. Peter, (Acts 5 : 15, 16.) and the handkerchiefs and aprons of St. Paul (Acts 19 : 12.) many wonderful cures were effected. Why then should not the relics of the Saints be glorified after their death, when as friends of God they enjoy His presence, and why should they not deserve veneration from the faithful upon earth?

We therefore find in the Catholic Church, at all times, even in the first centuries, the pious custom practiced by the Christians, of collecting the relics of the Saints, especially those of the holy martyrs, which, as we have already remarked, were kept and venerated in holy places and in churches. Thus the Christians of Smyrna, in Asia Minor, (to cite one example out of many) carefully collected the bones of the holy Bishop Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom in that city in the year one hundred and sixty-seven, in order to keep them as precious treasures, as the Christians of Smyrna themselves declared in a letter, written by them to the Christians of Philadelphia, in which they describe the martyrdom of the Saint: "We then collected the relics, which are more valuable to us than precious stones and gold, and kept them in a becoming place, where with the Lord's permission we will assemble and joyfully celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom, in commemoration of those who have combated, and for the encouragement of those who have still to combat."

According to the most reliable writers of sacred history, many examples are given us of miracles, wrought by the Lord God through the relics of the Saints, or at their graves. Thus St. Augustine, in speaking of the wonders that were performed by means of the relics of SS. Gervase and Protase, says: "At that time, O Lord, thou didst reveal to Thy bishop (Ambrose) the place where were concealed the remains of the holy martyrs Gervase and Protase, whose bodies Thou didst preserve for so many years from corruption, but the discovery of whose relics averted famine, and at the same time appeased royal displeasure." These words refer to the empress Juliana, who was an adherent to the Arian heresy, and who cruelly persecuted St. Ambrose. "When they were found and disinterred, and were with becoming veneration carried to the church of St. Ambrose, not only were evil spirits cast out, as the demons themselves had to confess, but a man who had been blind for several years, and who was well known among the inhabitants, recovered his sight by applying to his eyes the handkerchief with which he had touched the box containing the relics of the Saint." St. Ambrose attests the same in several passages of his writings.

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4. THE VENERATION OF THE IMAGES OF THE SAINTS.

WHATEVER we have said in reference to the veneration of the relics of the Saints, may be applied also to the veneration of their images; they are dear to Christians, because they are reminded thereby of the person, the life and the virtues of the Saint, and the veneration of the image is paid in no sense to the image itself, or to the material of which it is made, but to the person whom it represents, and of whom we are reminded, just as we venerate the portraits of parents, relatives and friends, of kings and princes or of other celebrated persons. The enemies of the Church, of course, in order to justify the contempt they offer to the images of the Saints, quote the first commandment of God, which says: "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve *them*." (Exod. 20 : 4–5.)

It is evident, however, that by this commandment of God, idols only are forbidden, that is those images, which, according to the manner of the pagans, were destined to be worshipped; for immediately afterwards, God Himself gave directions to the Israelites to place in the Holy of Holies, over the ark of the covenant, two Cherubim of beaten gold, that is to say two images (Exod. 25 : 18.);

to set up a brazen serpent, (Numb. 21 : 8.) and ordered various figures and carvings to be placed in the temple of Jerusalem. (3 Kings 6 : 29.) It is true, that in the earliest times of Christianity the use and veneration of images of the Saints was not so prevalent as in later times, or as it is at the present day; because they feared that the Christians recently converted from paganism might misunderstand the veneration of sacred images, and thus return to their former idolatry.

We find, however, even in the early ages of Christianity, chalices and other sacred vessels adorned with the image of our Saviour; we find the cross painted upon almost all the walls of the Churches, and other paintings on the walls, representing events in sacred history. The more Christianity spread and the faster paganism disappeared, the less became the danger of Christians abusing the veneration of sacred images, or of their relapsing into paganism, and consequently the more frequent became the use of sacred images, and the more open the veneration paid to them by Christians. The most learned and distinguished doctors of the Church, even those of the first centuries, commend the veneration paid to sacred images and trace the origin of it to the days of the Apostles. St. Basil the Great, who died in the year 379, says: "I venerate the appearance of the Son of God in the flesh, and the Blessed Mary as the Mother of God, who bore Him according to the flesh; and I venerate also the holy Apostles, Prophets, and Martyrs; their images I venerate and affectionately kiss, since they (the images) have been given to us by the Apostles, and were not forbidden: they are painted in all our Churches." That even then the true meaning of the veneration paid to sacred images was understood, and that Christians knew how to discern between the use and the abuse of the custom, is evident from the expression used by Pope Gregory the Great, when writing the following letter to Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, who had the pictures painted on the church walls whitewashed and the images destroyed: "We approve of your having forbidden the WORSHIP of sacred images, but we censure you for having destroyed them. It is one thing to *worship* paintings or images, and another thing to learn by means of pictures, what is worthy of our veneration. What letters are to the Faithful, who understand reading, paintings are to those who cannot read, because by them even ignorant persons can see what they have to imitate, and by gazing upon them, those can in a certain manner read, who would otherwise remain in ignorance."

Worthy also of remark is what the same Holy Father says regarding crucifixes: "The image of Christ is not given to us that we may venerate it, as we would God Himself, but that at the remembrance of what the Son of God suffered, our love for Him, whose image we see, may be increased. In the same manner we do not bow our knees before an image as before God, but because we respect and venerate Him, of whom we are reminded by the image, either as He was born, or as He suffered, or as He sitteth upon the throne. And while

the image recalls to us the memory of the Son of God, it also gladdens our hearts in regard to His resurrection, or else it saddens it in regard to His sufferings."

The enemies of our Church however, in their ignorance continue to cast at us the reproach, that we venerate the Saints, their relics and their images, in a way injurious to the worship of God and in an idolatrous manner. Let us therefore listen to the words of Holy Church in refutation of these unjust accusations. The Council of Trent says in regard to this important point. Sess. 25.)

"The Fathers of the Holy Council command all Bishops, and all those whose office it is to teach and take care of souls, that according to the usage of the Catholic and Apostolic Church adopted since the first centuries of Christianity, and which is in harmony with the teachings of the Holy Fathers and the decrees of the Holy Councils, they should carefully instruct the faithful above all things in regard to the intercession and invocation of Saints, the veneration of relics and the legitimate use of images, and teach them, how the Saints reigning together with Christ, offer up to God their intercession for mankind, and that it is good and profitable, humbly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their intercession, assistance and help, to obtain benefits from God through His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, our only Saviour and Redeemer; that those are instigated by malice, who deny that we can ask the intercession of the Saints in heaven. or who maintain, that they do not pray for men, that their invocation is idolatry, and that it is in direct opposition to the word of God and the honor of Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, or that it is foolish, to implore those reigning in heaven either in words or in spirit." It was also decreed, "that the faithful should venerate the sacred bodies of the holy martyrs and of others, who were living members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost, and who shall be resuscitated by Him to eternal life and glorified, especially since men receive many benefits through them from God; so that those are condemned by the Church, who maintain that no honor or veneration is due to the relics of the Saints, or that the respect paid them and to other sacred relics is without profit to the faithful, and that their commemoration, in order to obtain their assistance, is observed in vain. It is further decreed, that the images of Christ, those of the Mother of God and of other Saints should be kept and preserved in churches, and due honor and veneration be paid them, not as though we were to believe that they possessed a divine power or that they of themselves could grant favors. We are also forbidden to place our whole hope in their statues, as the pagans did in their idols; for the honor we show to them, refers merely to the persons represented by them, so that when we kiss or kneel down before an image, we worship Christ and venerate the Saints, whose likeness they possess, and this custom is in accordance with the decrees of the councils, especially with those of the second Synod of Nice, passed against

the iconoclasts. This belief the Bishops should diligently teach, so that by the history of the mysteries of our redemption expressed in images or paintings, the people may be instructed and confirmed in the dogmas of our holy faith, and that thus from the images of the Saints great advantages may be derived, not only because the people will be reminded of all the benefits and gifts received through Christ, but because by the Saints salutary examples are brought before the eyes of the faithful, and the wonders of God made manifest, so that for benfits received they may be encouraged to give thanks to God and live according to the example of the Saints, to worship and love God, and practice piety; therefore whosoever teaches or believes any thing contrary to these decrees, let him be anathema."

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5. THE IMITATION OF THE SAINTS.

THE imitation of the Saints, or rather of their virtues, is unquestionably the most important and for us the most salutary part of the veneration of the Saints; for only by the faithful following of these our glorified brethren in the way of salvation, by the firm practice of virtues, which they have practiced and obtained eternal happiness, can we also participate in their glory in heaven. Therefore St. Paul says to the Faithful, and the lives of the Saints inculcate the same truth: "Be ye also followers of me, as I also am of Christ!" (1 Cor. 11 : 1.) And in truth there is nothing which could animate us more to the practice of all Christian virtues. to the faithful imitation of Christ in the way of the cross, to the valiant combat against the enemies of our salvation, and to constant desire after heaven, than the attentive contemplation of the life, virtues, combats and merits of the many holy servants of God, which the history of the Catholic Church presents to us in all times. We see here in countless brilliant examples, what weak men can do, when assisted by the grace of God; for how many hardships have not many Saints of every age and sex, tender children, weak virgins, feeble old men endured; how many bitter pains have they not suffered, how many temptations have they not overcome, and what glorious works have they not accomplished for the honor of God! We see also by contemplating the lives of the Saints, that no state of life, and no earthly circumstance (as long as it does not deviate from the path of religion and morality) excludes us from endeavoring to be perfect and holy, for not only have Apostles and martyrs, hermits and monks become Saints, but also men of

the world, men of all stations of life, rich and poor, kings and beggars. The true following of the Saints, as commanded by Christianity, does not consist in imitating them in their outward deeds or in their extraordinary life, but in faithfully observing, after their example, the commandments of God and the Church, and practicing those sublime virtues, which our Saviour has taught us by word and deed, and by which alone man can become both holy and happy. St. Chrysostom, in the following beautiful words, exhorts us to the imitation of the Saints: "He who admires the merits of the Saints with holy love, and speaks in praise and extols the glory of the just, should also imitate their holy morals and their justice; and whoever finds pleasure in a life that is pleasing to God should feel himself also animated to the same cheerful obedience towards God. He must therefore either imitate what he praises, or else he praises what he refuses to imitate, and endeavors by praising others, to represent himself also as worthy of praise, and by admiring the merits of the Saints, to imagine himself also holy; for if we love the just and those that are faithful to God, because we recognize in them justice and constant fidelity to the faith, we also can become what they have become, if we do what they have done. It should not be difficult for us to imitate what we have seen them accomplish, since we know that they may not have had such encouraging and glorious examples as we have. Thus we see even in the beginning of the world, that ABEL was innocently killed, that HENOCH, as one pleasing to God, was taken away from this world, that NOE was found to be a just man, that ABRAHAM proved himself faithful, that MOSES was distinguished for his meekness, JOSUE for his purity, and DAVID for his mildness; that ELIAS was pleasing to God, that DANIEL was found holy before the Lord, and that the three youths came forth victorious from the fiery furnace.

"The Apostles, the disciples of Christ, are given us as teachers and models; following their example the Confessors combat with heroic courage, the martyrs obtain glorious triumphs and Christians are constantly conquering the enemies of their salvation with the arms of God. In this army of Saints we find equal virtues. You Christians, are therefore foolish combatants, if you imagine that you can conquer without combating, and triumph without strife. Exercise your strength, combat courageously, and strive incessantly in this holy warfare! Remember your baptismal vows, consider your state of life, and be true to your vocations as soldiers of Christ; you have bound yourselves to those vows, you have chosen your state of life, and for this reason you possess the name of CHRISTIAN, soldier, anointed warrior of light against darkness."

THIRD PART

OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

PENTECOST-CYCLE.

With the two preceding cycles of the Church—Christmas and Easter, is connected the third cycle, Pentecost, proposing to us the perfection of the whole great work of salvation, which the triune God has effected for mankind, through the third person, the Holy Ghost. As God the Father decreed the redemption and salvation of mankind, and commenced it by sending His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; as the Son of God undertook the work of redemption, decreed and already begun by the Father, carried it out, and perfected it; so also should the Holy Ghost put in operation upon earth the work of salvation, decreed and commenced by the Father, undertaken and perfected by the Son, in that great institution, which Christ has established for that end,—the *Catholic Church*. He, the Holy Ghost, should confirm and spread her throughout the world. He should constantly direct and govern her, and should apply to all men the fruits of redemption by bringing them into this Church, and by making them partakers of the means of salvation.

This third great cycle, with its principal feast, Pentecost, which is the centre of it, is therefore intimately connected with the second cycle, Easter, for the divine efficacy of the Holy Ghost, commemorated on that day, (Pentecost) is to be considered as the application and realization of that which Christ had perfected, and as the completion and conclusion of His work. Therefore is it, that the Feast of Pentecost with its Octave, falls within the season of Easter, since the joy of the resurrection of the Lord, and the joyful Alleluias which resound throughout the Church during this entire holy season, can only then receive their full signification. By the sending of the Holy Ghost, and His gracious efficacy, the blessed fruits of redemption are imparted to the faithful,

fruits which they never would have received except through the power of the Holy Ghost

As Pentecost is so closely connected with Easter, the paschal season becomes a most appropriate preparation for Pentecost, and the Church on the last Sunday of Easter, by referring to the coming of the Holy Ghost and His effects, gradually prepares us for the festival of Pentecost.

The twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost, serve as a prolonged celebration; for the Pentecostal season is one in which the whole moral life of Christians is placed before us; their different vocations with their manifold obligations, and all the means necessary to obtain salvation; in fact all the fruits of that spirit, to which the Spirit of God leads the faithful.

Pentecost has a striking analogy to Easter; on the vigil of the former takes place, as on Holy Saturday, the blessing of the baptismal font, with the difference, that before the blessing on Whitsun eve, only five lessons are read, while twelve are read on Holy Saturday. In the primitive days of Christianity catechumens were baptized on Whitsun eve. This custom is full of significant reference to the great truth, that in baptism we are regenerated in water and the Holy Ghost as children of God, and heirs of heaven; that is, through the sanctifying grace which is imparted to us by the Holy Ghost, when we receive this Sacrament. (John 3 : 5.)

VIGIL OF PENTECOST, CALLED ALSO WHITSUN EVE.

Introit of the Mass.—Eze. 36.

"When I shall be sanctified in you I will gather you together out of all nations, and I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness, and I will give you a new spirit, Alleluia, Alleluia. I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall be ever in my mouth. Glory be to the Father."

In these words of the prophet, God the Lord Himself gave to His people the consoling promise, that He would bring them back from the sad captivity in which they were kept, and that He would in the new law purify them from their sins through the mysterious waters of holy baptism, and renew them in spirit. In the more ample sense of the word, this promise refers not only to the children of Israel, but also to the faithful children ofthe Church of Christ, typified by the children of Israel, and it is very appropriately proposed to us on this vigil of the descent of the Holy Ghost, when the moral purification and spiritual renovation of the children of God take place in us.

This Introit is only read at Low Mass; there is no Introit read at the solemn High-Mass, because, as on Holy Saturday, the High-Mass is the continuation of the blessing of the baptismal font, forming, as it were, one and the same uninterrupted solemnity.

PRAYER.

Grant, we beseech Thee, O God Almighty, that the splendor of Thy brightness may shine forth upon us; and the light of Thy light may by the illustration of the Holy Ghost, confirm the hearts of those who are regenerated by Thy grace. Through our Lord,.....in the unity of the same, &c.

EPISTLE.—Act. 19 : 1–8.

"And it came to pass when Apollo was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper parts, came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples: and he said to them: Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? But they said to him: We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost. And he said: In what then were you baptized? Who said: In John's baptism. Then Paul said: John baptized the people with the baptism of penance, saying: That they should believe in him who was to come after him, that is to say, in Jesus. Having heard these things they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve. And entering into the synagogue, he spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading, concerning the kingdom of God."

Apollo, spoken of in this Epistle, was according to the Acts, a Jew of Alexandria in Egypt, an eloquent man, well versed in the Scriptures. He was a disciple of St. John the Baptist, who had instructed him as to the coming of the Messiah. He was subsequently instructed in the Christian faith by the disciples of St. Paul, and became, after baptism, a most zealous preacher of the Gospel.

The Christians of Ephesus, although instructed and baptized by Apollo in the baptism of St. John, had not when St. Paul came to them a sufficient knowledge of the Christian doctrine, and knew nothing of the Holy Ghost and His effects. The Apostle therefore taught the faithful of Ephesus, the difference between the baptism of Jesus and that of St. John. He then baptized them, and imparted to them, by the imposition of his hands, the Holy Ghost, who brought forth in them the same wonderful effects which He had produced in the Apostles.

GOSPEL.—St. John 14 : 15–21.

"At that time Jesus said to His disciples: If you love Me, keep my commandments, and I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete,

that he may abide with you forever; the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him: but you shall know him; because he shall abide with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more. But you see me, because I live and you shall live. In that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

This Gospel on the Vigil of Pentecost, contains very appropriately the special promise in which Christ announces to His disciples the coming of the Holy Ghost, who was to remain with them and with their successors forever in the Church. Our Saviour calls the attention of his disciples and of all the faithful to the fact, that no one who serves the world or is a slave to his passions, can receive this heavenly Comforter, the Holy Ghost; but that on the contrary it is necessary to be filled with true love towards God and our Saviour, which love manifests itself not only in words, but in a good life and in the faithful practice of His commandments. The instruction given by St. Augustine on the above words, is very beautiful. He says: "He is truly in the most Blessed Trinity, whom the Catholic faith confesses to be equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son—the Holy Ghost. It is He, of whom the Apostles say: 'The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.' (Rom 5 : 5.) When therefore the Lord says: 'If you love me, keep my commandments, and I will ask the Father and he shall give you another Paraclete,' he speaks of the Holy Ghost, without whom we can neither love God, nor keep His commandments. How shall we love? By receiving Him, since without receiving Him we cannot love. Or how shall we keep the commandments? By receiving Him—for unless we receive Him, we cannot keep the commandments. We must understand it so, that he who loves, already possesses the Holy Ghost, and by possessing Him, deserves to have Him in a still higher degree, thereby loving Him the more. The disciples had indeed received the Holy Ghost, whom the Lord promised them (with the fullness of His graces) and without whom they could not call Him their Lord; but they possessed Him not in such a degree as Christ had promised them. They had therefore received the Holy Ghost, and had not received Him, because they possessed Him not in such a degree as it was possible to receive Him. They possessed therefore only the lower degree, the higher degree was not yet imparted to them (as we also receive the Holy Ghost in a lower degree in baptism, but in the fullness of His graces and gifts in the sacrament of confirmation.) They possessed Him first in a hidden manner, as it were, but they were to receive Him also in a public manner, for it belonged to the higher degree of the

effects of the Holy Ghost, that they knew themselves to be in possession of Him Of this gift of the Holy Ghost, the Apostle says: 'We have received not the spirit of this world, but the spirit that is of God, that we may know the things that are given us from God.' (1 Cor. 2 : 12.)

"But the Lord, by saying: 'I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete,' shows that He also is a Paraclete, for it is said of Him: 'We have an advocate (Paraclete) with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just.' (1 John 2 : 1.) Of the world, however, He says, that it could not receive the Holy Ghost in the same sense. It is said: 'The wisdom of the flesh is the enemy of God,' (Rom. 8 : 7,) for it is not subject to the law of God, and cannot be; just as we say: injustice cannot be justice. By the world He understands here, the lovers of the world, the love of which is not of the Father (1 John 2 : 15.) Therefore to this love of the world which we should endeavor to destroy within us, is opposed the love of God, which is infused into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us. The world cannot receive Him, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him; for worldly love has not spiritual eyes, through which the Holy Ghost can be seen, who is generally to be seen in a spiritual manner; but you shall know Him, the Lord continues, because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you; that is, He shall be in you, to remain with you; but He cannot remain, until He has an existence; for the fact of existing precedes the act of remaining. Therefore in order that the disciples may not believe that the Holy Ghost would remain with them in the same manner as a guest remains with a friend, He adds: 'He shall be in you.' Thus He is seen in an invisible manner, for if He was not within us, how could the knowledge of Him be within us? In the same manner do we know ourselves; we see the face of another, but our own we cannot see. The conscience however is only within us, but the Holy Ghost can be without us. He is given to us to be with us; He cannot, however, be seen and known, if He be not within us. After having promised the Holy Ghost, the Lord says: 'I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you.' Although the Son of God has brought us as children to His Father, desiring to have Him for our Father through grace, whom He had for Father by (divine) nature, He shows His Fatherly love towards us, when He adds: 'I will not leave you orphans.'"

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

THIS solemn Feast is called in the language of the Church, "Pentecost," that is, the fiftieth day. The Jewish Pentecost, which was a type of the Christian Pentecost, was celebrated on the fiftieth day, or seven weeks after Easter, for which reason it is also called, the Feast of the Seven Weeks.

The cause of the institution of the Jewish Pentecost, was the solemn promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai, amid thunder and lightning, on the fiftieth day after the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, and was intended to serve as a grateful remembrance of the grace which God the Lord had bestowed upon the people, by the giving of the law, and by the institution of the old covenant. As the feast of Pentecost occurred at a time when the fruits of the earth were ripe, it was on that account also called the "Feast of the harvest of the first-fruits," because on that day the first-fruits had to be offered up to God. Exodus 23 : 16; Levit. 23 : 15; Num. 28 : 26–31; Deuter. 16 : 9–10.)

The first Jewish Pentecost, fifty days after the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, may be called their first Easter. Then, by the solemn promulgation of the law, the old covenant was concluded between God and the people, or rather confirmed, since at its foundation, it had already been concluded, by the killing of the Paschal lamb, (Jerem. 31 : 33) and as Judaism with its manifold precepts, sacrifices, and other religious usages then began, so in like manner, the new covenant between God and man was to be established by the coming of the Holy Ghost on the first Christian Pentecost, on the fiftieth day after the resurrection of the Lord, which may be justly called the first Christian Easter. At the death of Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, the old law ended by the rending of the veil of the temple, (Matthew 27 : 51) and at Pentecost the new law of grace was by wonderful signs solemnly promulgated, and the Church of Christ, typified by Judaism, was to commence.

On this day was to be fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremias, who thus spoke in the name of the Lord to the people: "Behold the day shall come, saith the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Juda, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; the covenant which they made void, and I had dominion over them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will give my law in their bowels and I will write it in their heart, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jerem. 31 : 31–33.)

The Festival of Pentecost is therefore explained by the Fathers of the Church, in a threefold manner: 1. As a feast transmitted from the old into

the new law; 2. As the solemn descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles; 3. As the first promulgation of the Gospel and the beginning of the new law. The holy Pope Leo the Great, in his first sermon on this Feast, says: "The heart of every Catholic should feel, my beloved, that this Festival is to be considered as one of the principal solemnities; and none can question the veneration due to this day—a day which the Holy Ghost has sanctified by the wonderful effects of His grace; this is the tenth day from the one on which the Lord ascended into heaven, and seated Himself at the right hand of the Father, but it is the fiftieth since His resurrection. It contains the great mysteries of the old, as well as of the new law, whereby it becomes evident, that grace (that is Christianity) was first announced by the law, (Judaism) but that the law was fulfilled by grace. As the law was given to the Hebrews on Mount Sinai, after their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, on the fiftieth day after the offering up of the Paschal lamb, so after the passion of Christ, when the true Lamb of God was sacrificed, on the fiftieth day after His resurrection the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles, and upon the faithful, and the Christian can therefore easily learn how the beginning of the old law served as a type of the foundation of the Gospel, and how the second covenant as well as the first was established by the same spirit.

From the day of Pentecost the trumpet of the Gospel preaching has resounded; from that day the showers of grace and streams of blessings have moistened every desert and dry place; for in order to renew the face of the earth, the spirit of God was borne over the waters, and to expel the darkness, the rays of the new light shone forth in the splendor of tongues of flame, and the penetrating word of God: then the fiery eloquence was revealed which should possess the faculty of giving light, and the power of burning. to incite to knowledge and to remove sin."

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Wisdom 1 : 7.

"The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole earth, alleluia, and that which containeth all things, hath knowledge of the voice, alleluia, alleluia. Let God arise, and his enemies be scattered; and let them that hate him, fly before his face. (Ps. 67 : 2.) Glory be to the Father."

The Church very appropriately recalls to-day, at the Introit of the Mass, this prophecy of the old law, in which the Holy Ghost, through the mouth of King Solomon, points to the effects which He would produce by His descent upon the Apostles. He says that the whole earth should be filled with His glory, that the grace of Christianity should be spread over the whole world, and that the gift of tongues should be miraculously imparted to His apostles. In Psalm 67, another effect of the Divine Spirit upon earth is announced: the scattering of the enemies of God, the overthrow of the world and its adherents, the destruction of the prince of darkness. and the strengthening and spreading of the kingdom of God upon earth.

PRAYER.

O God, who on this day didst instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that we may be truly wise in the same Spirit, and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the unity of the same.

EPISTLE.—Acts 2 : 1-11.

"When the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in the same place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming; and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them cloven tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these, that speak, Galileans? And how have we heard, every man our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt, and parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome; Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

This lesson contains the simple, but clear and sublime narrative of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples of the Lord. As the incidents related to us in the Gospel of to-day, are the same as those of the Epistle, one explanation will suffice for both.

GOSPEL.—John 14 : 23-31.

"At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words. And the word which you have heard is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you: I go away, and come unto you. If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father: for the Father is greater

than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe. I will not now speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not any thing. But that the world may know that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I."

In this Gospel, which again contains a part of the last discourse of Christ to His disciples, our Saviour promises His disciples the Holy Ghost the Comforter, who should dwell forever in them, teaching them all truth.

Our Saviour draws the attention of His Apostles to the fact, that, in order to receive the Divine Spirit in their hearts, and with Him also the Father and the Son, the whole and undivided Trinity, and that they might keep the Holy Ghost always with them, they should be filled with a true love of God, which they should show by keeping His word, that is, by fulfilling His commands.

The holy Pope Gregory the Great, in referring to these words of Christ, says: "Every one of you, when asked if He loves God, will with confidence and conviction answer: I love Him. You have heard however what the Eternal Truth says: 'If any man love me, he will keep my word.' Love therefore is proved by the practice of good works. The same Evangelist says also in the Epistle: 'He who saith that he knoweth God, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' (1 John 2 : 4.) For we love God only then in truth, when according to His commands we restrain our passions; but he who gives himself up to unlawful desires, does not love God in truth, because he opposes the will of God.

"And thus continues our Lord: 'My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him.' Besides, my beloved brethren, what an honor it is to receive God in the abode of our hearts! Indeed, if a rich and powerful friend would come into your dwelling, you would at once remove from the whole house whatever might be offensive to your guest. Whoever therefore wishes to prepare his heart for the reception of God, must first remove the uncleanliness of bad works. Observe, however, what the Eternal Truth says: 'We will come to him and will make our abode with him.' He enters the heart of some, and still He does not make His abode with them, because after having returned to God in penance, they have, in the time of temptation, forgotten what they regretted, and returned to their sinful works, as if they never had any real sorrow for them. To him, therefore, who loves God in truth, who keeps His commandments, He will come and make His abode, because the love of God penetrates him, so that even in the time of temptation he will not depart from His love."

Our Saviour then promised peace to His disciples, and as He expressly adds, *his peace, not as the world giveth.* The world cannot give true peace, it gives only the appearance of peace, which consists in enjoyments that do not

satisfy the heart of man, in goods that are perishable, and which man must soon resign: it consists in hopes that will never be fulfilled, in wishes that can never be gratified, the real possession of which only awakens new desires. As the world is in direct opposition to God and His commandments, the peace which it can give is seldom or never obtained or enjoyed without sin, and is, therefore, destroyed by the reproaches of conscience. It creates in truth only disquietude and dissension in the heart of man, and discord and enmity with God. Justly therefore does the prophet Isaias say: "The wicked are like the raging sea, which cannot rest; there is no peace to the wicked." (Isaias 57 : 21–22.) The peace of Christ however, which according to St. Paul, "surpasseth all understanding," (Philipp. 4 : 7,) is the true and abiding peace, which never will pass away, and consists in a quiet conscience, in friendship with God, in the consolation and hope of obtaining the eternal and heavenly goods, and in the foretaste of this only true and abiding treasure, which our Saviour has promised to His faithful servants. This peace however can be given to those only who truly love God and keep His commandments, and it is for this reason that the holy Pope Leo the Great says: "The true peace of God consists in not separating ourselves from the will of God, and in rejoicing only in things belonging to God; for if sensuality is not opposed to the will, and the will does not contradict reason, then true quiet of the spirit exists, and the kingdom of God reigns within us."

Christ then told His Apostles, that His going to the Father was no cause for sadness, but rather for joy, because His return would be His exaltation and glorification, and the security for their own glorification in the kingdom of heaven.

The disciples, remembering the promise of Christ regarding the descent of the Holy Ghost, had, according to the Epistle of to-day, assembled in Jerusalem immediately after the ascension of Christ, there to await the fulfillment of that promise, the coming of the Holy Ghost. They numbered about one hundred and twenty, and among them was Mary the mother of our Lord, and other holy women; they assembled in the same house where our Lord celebrated the last supper with them, where He appeared to them several times after His resurrection, and which was therefore sanctified by the most sublime mysteries of divine love. There, in quiet solitude, withdrawn from the turmoil of the world, they prepared in fervent prayer for the new proof of divine love which should be given them, that their hearts might be prepared for the reception of *that Spirit, whom the world cannot receive.*

When the days of Pentecost were accomplished, there was suddenly heard, according to the Epistle of to-day, a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. This happened, according to the doctrine of our holy Church, on Whit-Sunday. The coming of the Holy Ghost was *sudden*; for He imparts the fullness of His graces and

gifts to the faithful out of pure love, and not from any merit of theirs; and His coming is not confined to a certain hour, but happens when man least expects Him. Suddenly and unexpectedly He changes the worldly-minded man into a spiritual and heavenly-minded being, as was proved in the conversion of Mary Magdalen, St. Paul, and innumerable others.

St. Gregory says: "O what an artist is this Spirit! He does not need time to perfect His works; as soon as He touches the intellect of man, it is enlightened; touching and teaching is the same with Him; for as He enlightens the human heart, He changes its desires; He removes at once that which was, and gives that which was not."

The mighty wind which filled the house, but which was heard throughout the whole city, was an emblem of the Gospel, which like a sound was to spread throughout the world, and which proceeding as it were from the lips of the Apostles, would fill all the countries of the earth, as prophesied by David: "Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." (Ps. 18 : 5.)

According to the explanation of St. Thomas Aquinas, by the mighty wind is understood the effects produced by the Holy Ghost in the kingdom of God, which is similar to the effects of the wind in the kingdom of nature; for as by breathing the air, life is given, so by the coming of the Holy Ghost, spiritual life of grace is given and preserved, and the heat of sensuality thereby subdued; this coming of the Holy Ghost purifies and cleanses the heart from impure inclinations, as the wind purifies the air from all impure vapors; it separates in us the noble from the ignoble, that which is good and perfect, from that which is bad and imperfect, as the wind separates the grain from the chaff. As the wind preserves the water from becoming impure, so does the coming of the Holy Ghost incite the heart to good works, and preserves it from becoming, wicked; it promotes virtue and fertilizes its growth in the souls of others; it alone brings forth the effects of the word of God, just as the wind wafts freighted ships into the port of their destination. "Give me," says St. Chrysostom, "a ship ever so lightly freighted, a helmsman, sailors, ropes and anchor; but if there is no wind, will not all preparations be useless? The same happens in the case of a well-prepared sermon; even though it may be the preparation of a profound mind; if the Holy Ghost, who imparts the power, is not there, all eloquence and display of intellect will be as nothing."

The descent of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples of the Lord was expressed outwardly by the parted tongues as of fire, which appeared to them, and sat upon every one of them; this was not without a meaning, as were also the different appearances of the Holy Ghost, of which we read in sacred history, adapted to the effects, which He intended to produce in man.

St. Thomas Aquinas, speaking of this, says: "The Holy Ghost assumes different forms, according to the effect which He desires to impart; He appears

under different forms, but not as if the form seen was the Holy Ghost Himself, for He can not assume the form of a visible being; but the form seen was a manifestation of the invisible coming. At the baptism of Christ the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of a dove—a fruitful bird—to denote the spiritual regeneration to be effected through Christ in the Holy Ghost; at the transfiguration He appeared in the form of a light cloud, to signify the richness and abundance of instruction. He was imparted to the Apostles first under the form of breathing, when they received the power of forgiving sins, in order to denote the power of the Holy Sacraments, which gives and preserves the life of Christians; He appears however under the form of fiery tongues, to indicate the office of teaching." Other doctors of the Church assert a sevenfold relation of the fire to the effects of the Holy Ghost:

1. Because God, especially God the Holy Ghost, is the embodiment of the most effective, the most powerful love, and is therefore called in the Holy Scriptures "a consuming fire." (Deuter. 4 : 24; Hebr. 12 : 29.)

2. Because the Holy Ghost introduced the prophets by fire as it were into their office, according to the words of Jeremias the prophet, saying: "From above He hath sent fire into my bones;" how much more necessary was it not for the Apostles to be initiated by fire into their holy vocation.

3. It indicates, that the law of Christ is that of fire, that is a law of *love*.

4. It denoted the effects which the Holy Ghost would produce in the Apostles and in all the Faithful, as: cleansing, purifying, union with God, enlightenment, and desire for heaven.

5. It signifies suffering and affliction, through which the Apostles had to pass, as through fire, as offerings ascending to God in sweet odor.

6. The fire indicates also the separation between right and wrong, between good and evil, a separation which the Holy Ghost effects, when He penetrates our hearts, and which He teaches us also how to accomplish.

7. The Holy Ghost poured upon the Apostles the fountain of living light, so that, like twelve rays of the sun, or as so many lamps of truth, they might illumine the whole world.

By the form of tongues is especially understood the gift of languages, which the Apostles received at the descent of the Holy Ghost, as also the faculty, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, of announcing the Gospel freely and liberally to the whole world.

The disciples and those who were present at the house in Jerusalem, were on Pentecost all FILLED with the Holy Ghost, that is, they received Him in His whole divine substance, and in the fullness of His graces and gifts. "On this day," says St. Augustine, "the Holy Ghost was not with the Faithful through the grace of visitation, but through the real presence of His majesty, the vessels were no longer filled with the odor of balsam, but the substance of the holy ointment was itself there."

The first effect which the Holy Ghost brought forth in the Apostles, was the GIFT OF TONGUES, which the Apostles received in a two-fold manner, so that they were not only able to speak the languages of the different nations, but, while speaking their own language, they were understood by persons of different nations and tongues, who believed that the Apostles were addressing them in their own peculiar language. According to the opinion of the Holy Fathers, the disciples of Christ spoke all the languages of the world, and in reference to this the holy Pope Leo the Great says: "There is no doubt, but that in the joyful harmony of all human voices, the Majesty of the Holy Ghost was present."

This extraordinary event, which happened while the Apostles were together, and which was heard throughout the whole city, attracted the attention of the inhabitants and of the many strangers, who on account of the Feast, had come to the city. A great many people gathered around the house, and when they expressed their astonishment at the gift of tongues possessed by the Apostles, very soon another and a no less powerful effect of the Holy Ghost became visible in the Apostles. These men, who before had been timid and of little faith, who had fled when Christ had been betrayed, and who even after His death had for fear of the Jews locked themselves up in the house, were now at once freed from their fear and despondency; they appeared boldly and fearlessly before the whole people of Jerusalem, and consequently also before the enemies of Christ, to announce to them the same doctrine, for which Christ had been crucified. St. Peter, who had shortly before denied his Master in the presence of a maid-servant was now the first who spoke, in order to preach to the assembled multitude the doctrine of Christ, and to persuade them to do penance for their crime, and to believe in the God-man, who was crucified but rose again. And indeed it became him who had denied Christ to confess Him first before all; it became him, whom the Lord had appointed to be the pastor of His flock, the supreme head of His church, to be the first to gather the stray sheep, and to open the entrance into the Church of Christ to all nations. "Peter, who spoke for all," says St. Chrysostom, "represented for all the cause of faith, and became by his word the teacher of all; he is the first advocate of religion, the first instructor, the first preacher of the divine word; he is the first who opened the Church not only for the inhabitants of Jerusalem and for those in Judea, but also for the Parthians, Medes, Phrygians, and other nations. He who has been appointed by the Lord as pastor of all, commences to gather the sheep from all nations; he teaches them faith, but at the same time apostolic practice, that is, to renounce all, to assemble for prayer and the breaking of the bread, as instituted by the Lord.

When St. Peter rose, and filled with the Holy Ghost spoke to the assembled multitude, by calling their attention to the fact, that the prophecy of the old law had now been fulfilled, (Joel 2,) that the Holy Ghost would be imparted to

all men, and that they would receive the gift of prophecy and miracles; and when he held up to them their crime, telling them that they had crucified through the hands of the heathens, Jesus the Son of God, who had proved His divine mission by so many miracles before their own eyes, but that He, whom they had crucified, had now risen from the grave and ascended into heaven, and elevated upon the throne of glory had sent the Holy Ghost upon them, His adherents and disciples;—then were they moved by the address of the Apostle, and compunction filled their hearts, and they said to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles: "What shall we do, men and brethren?" But Peter said to them: "Do penance and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

And at once another great effect of the Holy Ghost became manifest, for about three thousand souls were converted to the belief in Christ, and were on the same day through holy baptism added to the communion of the disciples of the Lord. (Acts 2 : 14–41.)

Thus, by the miraculous effect of the Holy Ghost, was established the first Christian community, the commencement of the Catholic Church, which through the divine assistance of Him who so miraculously instituted her, has increased so rapidly, and which receives daily more and more children into her bosom. Even then the Church existed under the same form of government, the same order and regulations were observed, and will be for ever, as the *visible* community of the faithful, governed by the visible supreme Head, appointed by the Lord himself, by St. Peter, whom the rest of the Apostles and disciples of the Lord assisted in the government of the Church; then as now she was united in the communion of the universal doctrine of Christ, by prayer and by the means of salvation instituted by Jesus Christ, as clearly expressed in the Acts: "And they were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of the bread and in prayers." (Acts 2 : 42.)

Wherever the Gospel was preached and the Church of Christ established, the Apostles, as may be seen in the epistle of to-day and of the two following feasts, imparted to the faithful received into the Church, the Holy Ghost, in the *sacrament of Confirmation* by the imposition of their hands and by their prayers; and this imparting of the Holy Ghost has always been an exclusive prerogative of the *Apostles* and of their successors, the rightfully ordained Bishops of the Catholic Church. The Holy Fathers of the first centuries unanimously confirm this apostolic usage of our holy Catholic Church: the imparting of the Holy Ghost to the faithful, through the sacrament of Confirmation, as a general and essential institution of Christ. St. Clement, of Rome, a disciple of St. Peter, says: "Every one should hasten to be regenerated (that is baptized) without delay, and then to be sealed by the Bishop, that is, to receive the *seven-fold gifts of the Holy Ghost*, since no one can be a perfect Christian, who out of contempt and of his own will refuses to receive *this sacrament*, as we have

received it from St. Peter, and as the other Apostles have taught according to the command of the Lord."

Tertullian, living in the second century, says on the same subject: "The body is anointed (with chrism in the holy sacrament of Confirmation,) in order that the soul may be preserved; the body is sealed, that the soul may be confirmed; the body is overshadowed by the imposition of the hands, that the soul may be enlightened by the Holy Ghost." St. Cyprian, living in the third century, says: "The same is still done among us, that those who are baptized in the Church, present themselves to the pastors of the Church to receive the Holy Ghost through our prayers and the imposition of our hands." St. Jerome, living in the fourth century, says on this subject: "Do you not know, that it is the practice of the Church to impose hands upon those who are baptized, in order to invoke the Holy Ghost? You ask, where is it written? In the Acts of the Apostles. And if it were not written there, the universal and unanimous usage of the Church would in this case be law." In the same century lived St. Augustine, who speaks as follows on the above subject: "By the invocation of the Holy Ghost, and the prayers of the Bishops, who impose hands upon the faithful, the Holy Ghost comes over them, as the Apostles prayed that Christ might send the Holy Ghost over the faithful, upon whom they laid hands. It is God, and not the Apostles or the Bishops, who imparts the Holy Ghost."

As in the sacrament of Confirmation the same Holy Ghost is given to the faithful, who descended on Pentecost upon the Apostles, it is very natural, that in *essential* things they should receive the same effects of the Holy Ghost which were imparted to the Apostles. The *extraordinary* gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were given to the Apostles, such as the gift of tongues, of miracles, and of prophecy, have in the course of centuries become more rare in the Church, and have almost entirely disappeared, because they are not so necessary, since Christianity has been established all over the world; we find, however, in later times, that besides the gift of miracles, that of tongues had been given to different Saints of our Church for the same purposes that they were imparted to the Apostles. Thus St. Pachomius (a hermit, living in the Egyptian desert), after praying three hours, obtained the faculty of speaking Latin with a Roman. St. Ephrem, the Syrian, obtained by the prayer of St. Basil the gift of knowing the Greek language; St. Dominic, the great founder of the order of Preachers, after a fervent prayer, obtained for himself and his companions the gift of speaking German, in order to preach the Gospel to some German strangers, in whose company they had traveled for several days. St. Vincent Ferrer, a celebrated Dominican preacher, although he spoke in Spanish only, was listened to and understood by Greeks, Italians, Germans, Hungarians, and others, no matter to what nation they belonged. St. Anthony of Padua once preached in Rome and was understood by every one who heard him, although many were

foreigners. It is a well-known fact, that St. Francis Xavier, the celebrated Apostle of India and Japan, spoke fluently and correctly different languages, which he had never learned, and when he spoke in Spanish, he was also understood by persons of different nations; nor is it a less firmly established fact, that when questioned by different persons at the same time, he would by one answer satisfy them all. Many similar cases could be adduced from the lives of the Saints, making it evident that our Saviour still glorifies His Church by miracles, if they are necessary for the honor of God and for the salvation of the faithful.

Although we have not received these extraordinary and wonderful gifts of the Holy Ghost, the most necessary and prominent gifts of the Holy Ghost have been imparted to us in the holy sacrament of Confirmation, that is, light and strength in faith and in all other virtues, so that like the first disciples of Christ, we may be enabled with the assistance of the Holy Ghost to fight as faithful soldiers for the honor of God, for truth and virtue, and to come off victorious in the combat for the kingdom of God upon earth. We have especially received in the sacrament of Confirmation the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were already in the old law promised to the faithful, in order that they might become enlightened and strong in doing good, and to promote their own salvation. (Is. 11 : 2, 3.) They are:

1. The gift of Wisdom, by which we are told to value eternal goods more than temporal, to seek the one thing necessary, and to endeavor by all our thoughts, words and actions to advance the honor of God, our own salvation, and the welfare of our neighbor, that all our works may commence with God, may be continued with the assistance of His grace, and may be brought to a good and happy end.

2. The gift of Understanding, by which our mind is enlightened to understand the doctrines and precepts of our holy religion, and to keep them in our hearts, so that well-instructed in the knowledge of our salvation, we may know and practice what is right.

3. The gift of Counsel, by which we are guided in difficult cases, in doubts and uncertainties, to choose whatever is best and most conducive to advance the honor of God and our own salvation, and to walk with more certainty in the true liberty of the children of God.

4. The gift of Fortitude, by which we are armed in the combat for the kingdom of God upon earth, by which we overcome all obstacles and difficulties in the way of salvation, overcome all temptations, endure affliction and adversity with patience according to the will of God, and by which we are prepared to sacrifice even our lives for the honor of the name of Jesus.

5. The gift of Knowledge, by which is imparted to us information and discernment of which we stand in need in order to attain salvation, and by which we progress in good works; it is particularly the knowledge of salvation

which the Saints of God possess, and which excels all earthly knowledge and learning.

6. The gift of Devotion or Piety, which gives us a love and desire for supernatural things, so that like the primitive Christians, we may find our greatest joy in holy occupations, in prayer, in the service of God, and in the faithful fulfillment of His holy will.

7. The gift of the Fear of God, which is the beginning of all wisdom, and which infuses into us a salutary horror of evil, so that we may carefully guard against sin, and filled with the child-like fear of God, keep His commandments, and fear and detest nothing more than to offend Him, who is worthy of all our love.

Like the Apostles, so should we also through our own faithful co-operation with the grace of the Holy Ghost, by growing in virtue and perfection, by despising the world and its pleasures, by true love for God, make ourselves worthy of these special gifts; for the Holy Ghost dwells only where the love of God prevails. The pure fire of His divine love can not mingle with the impure flames of worldly love, for the spirit of the world has no intercourse with the spirit of God. Let us therefore consider well the words of St. Paul, which he at different times addresses to the faithful, admonishing them to co-operate with the grace of the Holy Ghost: "Know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body; but if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which you are. Grieve not the Holy Ghost, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." (1 Cor. 6 : 19, 20; 3 : 16, 17; Ephes. 4 : 30.)

PENTECOST, OR WHIT-MONDAY.

Introit of the Mass.—Ps. 50.

"He fed them with the fat of wheat, alleluia, and filled them with honey out of the rock, alleluia, alleluia. Rejoice to God, our helper, sing aloud to the God of Jacob. Glory be to the Father."

Prayer.

"O God, who didst give the Holy Spirit to thy Apostles, grant to thy people the effect of their pious prayers, that thou mayst also bestow peace on those to whom thou hast given grace. Through Christ our Lord."

EPISTLE.—Acts 10 : 42–48.

"In those days Peter, opening his mouth, said: Men and Brethren, the Lord commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he who was appointed by God to be judge of the living and of the dead. To him all the prophets give testimony, that through his name all receive remission of sins, who believe in him. While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. And the faithful of the circumcision, who came with Peter, were astonished, for that the grace of the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Gentiles also. For they heard them speaking with tongues, and magnifying God. Then Peter answered: Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

This epistle contains the continuation of the history of the conversion of the first heathens, related to us in the epistle of Easter-Monday, that is of the Roman captain Cornelius, and of his relatives and friends. As God the Lord Himself guided the vocation of these heathens to Christianity, in the same wonderful manner was the effect of the Holy Ghost revealed, when Peter announced to them the Gospel; for the Holy Ghost came over them with His manifold gifts, even before they had been baptized, which happened not only on account of the extraordinary and solemn calling of these first fruits of paganism, but also, that the Jewish Christians might not be scandalized at the reception of the heathens into the Church without first being circumcised (which some of the Jewish Christians erroneously considered necessary for the heathens, who wished to become Christians).

GOSPEL.—John 3 : 16–21.

"At that time Jesus said unto Nicodemus: God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him. He that believeth in him is not judged. But he that doth not believe, is already judged: because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment: because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light: for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God."

The Gospel of to-day contains a passage of a most important conversation which our Saviour had in the first year of His public life with Nicodemus, who,

although a Pharisee, and member of the high council, was an upright and pious man, and secretly a disciple of Christ. Our Saviour, in this conversation, points out the infinite love of God towards sinful man, for whom He delivered His only-begotten and beloved Son unto death, in order to save them from perdition, which they had brought on themselves, and to avert the terrible punishment they had deserved. He draws our attention also to the fact, that we should be grateful for the infinite love of God by having a lively faith and by practicing virtue and good works; for thus only can we partake of the fruits of His Redemption; those, on the contrary, who are given up to infidelity and sin, and to works of darkness, will bring upon themselves the judgment of God.

St. Augustine, in speaking on this Gospel, says: "When the physician visits his patient, he uses all means to cure him; and he commits suicide, who refuses to observe the prescriptions of the physician. In the same manner our Saviour came into this world. Why was He called the SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD? Because He came to save, but not to judge the world. If you do not wish to be saved, to be redeemed BY HIM, you will be judged, you will be rejected by YOURSELF. But what say I, you shall be judged? See what He says: 'He that believeth in Him, is not judged; but he that doth not believe,'—do you think He will add: 'he shall be judged'? No, He says: 'is ALREADY JUDGED;' the sentence is already pronounced, although the judgment has not yet been held; for the Lord knows His own; He knows who shall be preserved for the crown, and who shall be kept for the eternal and never-ending fire; He knows His wheat, and His chaff. He is already judged who does not believe, because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. 'And this,' continues the Lord, 'is the judgment, because the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil.'

"My brethren! In whom did our Lord find good works? In no one; He found evil everywhere. How then did some of them do truth, thereby coming to the light? for we read thus in the following: '*But* he that doeth truth, cometh to the light.' Many loved their sins and many confessed their sins, and he who acknowledges his sins and confesses them, acts already with God. God accuses you of your sins, and if you do the same, you unite yourselves with God. There are two, as it were: the man and the sinner. By saying: the MAN, we mean that God has acted; by saying the sinner, we mean the acts of man himself. Blot out what YOU have done, so that Almighty God may save what HE has done. You must detest *your* work in yourselves, and love the WORK OF GOD within you. As soon however as you commence to be displeased with what you have done, your good works have already begun, because you have accused yourselves of your evil deeds. The beginning of good works is the confession of evil deeds. 'You do truth,' continues the Lord, 'and will come to the light.' What does this mean: You do truth? If you do not flatter yourselves, if you do not consider yourselves better than others, if you do not boast, saying: 'I am just,

because you are unjust,'—then you will commence to do truth. You will then come to the light, that your works may be made manifest, because they are done in God. You detested your sins; but they would not have displeased you, if God had not enlightened and taught you His truth. But whoever loves his sins after he has been admonished, hates the light which admonishes him, and flees from it, that his evil works, which he loves, may not be made manifest; he however who doeth truth, confesses his sins and comes to the light."

WHIT-TUESDAY.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—4 Esdras 2 : 37.

"Receive the joy of your glory, alleluia; giving thanks to God, alleluia; who hath called you to a heavenly kingdom. Attend, O my people, to my law, incline your ears to the words of my mouth. (Ps. 77.) Glory be to the Father."

The Church by these words of Esdras invites all the Faithful to rejoice over the redemption which they have received, and admonishes them at the same time, by the words of the royal prophet, faithfully to obey the commandments of God, and thereby become partakers in the fruits of redemption, which they have obtained through the Holy Ghost.

PRAYER.

May the power of the Holy Ghost be with us, O Lord, we beseech Thee, which may mercifully purify our hearts and defend us from all adversities. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth in the unity of the same.

EPISTLE.—Acts 8 : 14-17.

"In those days: When the apostles who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God; they sent unto them Peter and John. Who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For he was not as yet come upon any of them: but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

The inhabitants of Samaria were baptized and received into the Catholic Church by St. Philip the Deacon (who should not be confounded with St. Philip the Apostle.) The fact, that according to this Epistle, Peter and John were

sent to these newly converted Christians, who had already received baptism, in order to impart to them also the Holy Ghost, is a convincing proof, that even in the time of the Apostles, and consequently according to an express precept of Christ Himself, there existed a sacrament different from baptism, by which the Holy Ghost in the fullness of His graces and gifts was imparted to the Faithful, who had already received the grace of the Holy Ghost in baptism; it is at the same time evident, that the imparting of the Holy Ghost was not done by ordinary priests, but by the Apostles themselves, by their prayers and by the imposition of their hands, as it is still done in the Catholic Church by the Bishops, the legitimate successors of the Apostles, when they administer the sacrament of Confirmation. According to the most reliable historians, the Apostles even then anointed the faithful with chrism, as is the universal custom of the Catholic Church.

GOSPEL.—John 10: 1–10.

"At that time Jesus said to the Pharisees: Amen, amen, I say to you: he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he hath led out his own sheep, he goeth before them: and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. But a stranger they follow not, but fly from him, because they know not the voice of strangers. This proverb Jesus spoke to them. But they understood not what he spoke to them. Jesus therefore said to them again: Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All others, as many as have come, are thieves and robbers: and the sheep heard them not. I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved: and he shall go in, and go out, and shall find pastures. The thief cometh not, but to steal and to kill and to destroy. I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly."

The Gospel of to-day is closely connected with the Gospel of the second Sunday after Easter, which contains the parable of the good shepherd. In this Gospel our Saviour calls Himself the "door of the sheepfold," that is, the true Church, the kingdom of God, restored upon earth. Through Him alone, therefore, have we access to the kingdom of God, to eternal happiness. To him only, who enters through Him, that is through the true belief in Christ and through baptism, "the Porter," the Holy Ghost, by applying the fruits of redemption and by sanctification, shall open the door of the eternal kingdom. By "shepherd," is understood first Christ Himself, and then every legitimate Bishop, Priest, teacher or pastor of the faithful.

The false teachers, however, who do not enter in by the door, that is, through

the belief in Christ, but who climb up another way into the ministry, are called thieves and robbers, because they appropriate to themselves what does not belong to them, and because they destroy the souls of men with their false doctrines, not agreeing with the teachings of Christ, nor proceeding from the Spirit of God.

St. Augustine, in speaking of this Gospel, says: "Our Lord has presented to us in the Gospel of to-day a picture of His flock, and of the door by which we enter into the sheepfold. The unbelievers may say: We lead a *good life;* but what does it profit them to glory in it, if they do not enter in by the door? For a *good life* should assist every one to obtain *eternal life;* but what avail will a *good life* be to him, who shall not possess *eternal life?* No, we can not say that those live well, who either out of blindness do not know the end of a good life, or out of pride pay no attention to it. No one has a true and well-founded hope of eternal life, as long as he does not know *the life, which is* CHRIST, and if he does not enter in by the door. Sometimes, however, such persons try to persuade others that they lead a good life, although they are not Christians; they want to climb up another way, and steal and kill, and not preserve and save, like the good shepherd. There were philosophers, who possessed great knowledge of virtue and vice, who wrote books, who drew the most ingenious conclusions from good and evil, who published their wisdom, and had the audacity to say: 'Follow us! Keep to our school, to our system, if you wish to live well!' But they entered not in by the door, they wished to destroy, to ruin and to kill. What shall we say of them? See, the Pharisees themselves read the Holy Scriptures, and in all that they said, they had Christ evermore on their lips, and hoped for His coming; but when He came, they knew Him not. They also gloried in their enlightenment and wisdom, and denied Christ, and entered not in by the door. They also seduced others, to ruin and kill them, not to save them; we are not allowed to follow them; but let us see whether all those who glory in the name of Christ, enter in by the door; for there are many who consider themselves to be enlightened through Christ, but who after all are nothing but false teachers."

FEAST OF THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY.

THE Catholic Church has brought before us in the three principal feasts, which we have already celebrated during the Ecclesiastical year, the threefold efficacy, which the Divinity has exercised in the three divine persons for the salvation of mankind, in order that in celebrating these feasts we should be animated with gratitude and love to praise and glorify Him who has shown us so much love. The FIRST of these three principal feasts, CHRISTMAS, reminds us of the mercy and love of GOD the FATHER, who, as our Saviour Himself says: "so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting," (John 3 : 16;) who by the incarnation of His only-begotten Son and by the satisfaction which He has given for our sins, received us again as His beloved children, and made us partakers of the hope of possessing the imperishable inheritance of the Saints in His heavenly kingdom. The SECOND principal feast, EASTER, brings before our eyes the infinite love of GOD the SON, who for the sins of the whole world has given satisfaction to the divine Justice by His terrible sufferings and ignominious death, and who, according to the words of the Apostle, "was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification." (Rom. 4 : 25.) He has delivered us from eternal death, and has through His resurrection, with which He sealed the work of our redemption, founded and typified OUR OWN resurrection to an everlasting and happy life.

Finally, the THIRD principal feast, PENTECOST, reminds us of the mercy and love of GOD THE HOLY GHOST, the Paraclete or Comforter, whom the Lord Jesus Christ, according to His promise, sent to His Apostles and all the Faithful, in order to perfect redemption upon earth, to make it effective in the Faithful, to sanctify them by sanctifying grace, and to make them partakers of the fruits of redemption.

The Church appropriately celebrates in connection with these three principal Festivals, and on the first Sunday after Pentecost, the solemn Feast of THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY, which is dedicated to the three divine persons together, and which again refers to all we have celebrated on the three principal feasts in honor of the three divine persons, presenting to us, as it were, in one great picture, the proof of mercy and love, which we have so abundantly received from the Blessed Trinity, and which can therefore justly be called the perfection of all the other feasts of the Lord.

All this, however, is already contained in the three principal feasts of the Ecclesiastical year, and as the Blessed Trinity is daily venerated and glorified in and through all the sacred actions of the Catholic Church, there was no special feast of the Blessed Trinity in the early times of Christianity. It is of a

later origin, and it can not be ascertained either when or by whom it was instituted. According to the general opinion, Stephen, Bishop of Liege (who died in the year nine hundred and two) was the most zealous promoter of it; he is said to have introduced it into his Cathedral and written the office used for the feast. His successor Richarius, extended its celebration to other churches, and thus it was gradually introduced into France and Germany. It was not, however, always observed on the same day; in some of the churches it was celebrated on the FIRST Sunday, and in others on the LAST Sunday after Pentecost, and again in others on the last Sunday of Advent. Pope John XXII. introduced the universal observance of this feast (between the years 1316 and 1334,)and appointed the first Sunday after Pentecost for its solemn celebration.

In regard to the object of this feast, St. Vincent Ferrer (one of the most celebrated preachers of the Dominican order) says: "As the feast of ALL-SAINTS is the central-feast of all the feasts of the Saints, so also is the feast of the Most Blessed Trinity the central-feast of the three principal feasts of the triune God, of CHRISTMAS, as the feast of the Father, who decreed the incarnation of His Son, of EASTER, as the feast of the Son, and of PENTECOST as the feast of the Holy Ghost. Let us therefore celebrate them together on one day, in order to offer homage to the Majesty of God, and humbly to venerate and adore the three divine persons in one.

"The great mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity,—one God in three persons, of which each one is true God, but forming together only One inseparable divine Being,—is more or less clearly defined in many passages of the Scriptures. Already in the beginning of time, at the creation of the world, the different persons of the Deity are expressed in the following words: 'The Spirit of God moved over the waters,' and in those spoken by the Lord Himself: 'Let us make man to our image and likeness.' (Genesis 1 : 2, 26.) In the Holy Scriptures the three divine persons are distinguished from one another; in many places mention is made of GOD THE FATHER, who created the world, who in His all-wise providence preserves, directs, and governs all, who out of love to us has sent His only-begotten Son into the world, to redeem and lead us to eternal life. Mention also is made of JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, who was born of the Father before all ages, who in time became man for us, having shown us by His doctrine and example the way to eternal life, having taken away our sins by His passion and death upon the cross, and reconciled us with His heavenly Father, so that through Him we have gained the hope of eternal life. The Holy Scriptures speak also of GOD THE HOLY GHOST, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, who first filled the Apostles with His graces and gifts, who enlightens us also by the assistance of His divine grace to perform good works, strengthening and confirming us in them. Each one of these three divine persons is, according to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, true God. St. Paul says: '(There is) One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and

in us all,' (Ephes. 4 : 6,) but also 'in Him,' (Christ,) continues the same Apostle, 'dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead corporally;' (Coloss. 2 : 9,) and in speaking of the divinity of God the Holy Ghost, he says: 'The Spirit (of God) searcheth all things, even the profound things of God.....The things that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God.' (1 Cor. 2 : 10–11.) That these *three* divine persons are but ONE God, St. John the Evangelist expresses in the following words: 'There are three that give testimony in heaven: the Father, the Word (that is the Son,) and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.' (1 John 5 : 7.)"

This great mystery of the most blessed Trinity is explicitly and clearly defined by St. Athanasius in his profession of faith, which he wrote against the dangerous errors of Arius (who denied the divinity of Christ), and which the Catholic Church commands her children to believe. This great Doctor of the Church says:

"The Catholic faith is, that we venerate one God in the Trinity, and Trinity in unity; not confounding the persons, nor separating the substance; for the person of the Father is one, the person of the Son one, and the person of the Holy Ghost one; but the Father, Son and Holy Ghost possess one and the same divinity, the same glory and the same eternal majesty. As the Father, so is the Son and the Holy Ghost. The Father is not created, nor is the Son, nor is the Holy Ghost. The Father is infinite, the Son is infinite, the Holy Ghost is infinite. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, the Holy Ghost is eternal; yet there are not three eternal, but only one eternal God, just as there are not three uncreated, nor three infinite, but one uncreated and one infinite God. In the same manner is the Father almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Ghost almighty; but there are not three almighty, but one Almighty God. In like manner the Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God; but there are not three Gods, but only one God. In the same manner the Father is the Lord, the Son the Lord, the Holy Ghost the Lord; yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord; for as Christian truth teaches us to confess each of the three persons as God and Lord, in like manner the Catholic religion forbids us to say that there are three Gods or three Lords. The Father is not made by any one, created or begotten; the Son is from the Father, not made, nor created, but begotten; the Holy Ghost is from the Father and Son, not made, nor created, but he proceeded from the Father and the Son; there is, therefore, but one Father, and not three Fathers; but one Son, and not three Sons; but one Holy Ghost, and not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity there is nothing first or last, nothing greater or less, but all three persons are equal and co-eternal, so that, as we have already declared, the unity is to be venerated in Trinity, and the Trinity in unity."

Very remarkable are the words written by St. Fulgentius on the mystery of the most blessed Trinity, saying: "The faith which the holy Patriarchs and

Prophets received before the Incarnation of the Son of God through divine revelation, which the holy Apostles also received from the Lord, when walking in the flesh, and which they, instructed by the Holy Ghost, not only proclaimed in words, but also left in their writings for all Christians coming after them—this faith teaches us, that there is one God in the most blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but there would in truth be no Trinity, if one and the same person were called Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for if the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, possessing but one nature, constituted but one person, there would be no reason why we should in truth speak of a Trinity; and again there would truly exist a Trinity, but the one God would not be the Trinity, if the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, different from one another in person, were also different from one another in nature. But as the nature of the one and true God, the Trinity, consists in this, that there is one God, but also one Trinity, therefore the true God is tri-une even in the persons, and One in one and the same nature. By this unity of nature, the Father is whole and entire in the Son and in the Holy Ghost, the Son whole and entire in the Father and the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost whole and entire in the Father and the Son. None of them exists out of one of them, because none of them either precedes the other in eternity, or is greater and more powerful than the other; for neither is the Father, according to the unity of the divine nature, younger or greater than the Son and the Holy Ghost, nor can the eternity and infinity of the Son, as though He were younger or greater, precede the infinity and eternity of the Holy Ghost, nor can they excel one another according to their nature."

The holy Pope Leo the Great expresses himself beautifully in one of his sermons on this great and sublime mystery, in regard to the difference of the three divine persons, and the unity of their one divine nature. He says: "In the divine Trinity nothing is unlike, nothing unequal, and whatever we know of their nature is not different either in regard to excellency, glory, or eternity; and although in the properties of the persons the Father is one, the Son is another and the Holy Ghost is another, there is, notwithstanding, no other deity, no different nature. Although the only-begotten Son is with and of the Father, and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, He exists not like a creature of the Father and of the Son, but living with both, and mighty and eternal, of the same substance as the Father and the Son. There are, therefore, no different attributes of the Father, none of the Son, none of the Holy Ghost, but all that the Father possesses, the Son has and the Holy Ghost also; and this unity was never wanting in the blessed Trinity, because it is the same to possess all these attributes and to be eternal. No difference in point of time or equality is to be thought of in reference to the Trinity, for if no one can define what God is, no one should dare to explain what He is not. Whatever, therefore, can be conceived in a pious heart concerning the eternal and immu-

The Ecclesiastical Year.

The following extracts represent the opinion of the Catholic press of the United States and Canada respecting this work.

ANTIGONISH, N. S.—*The Casket.*

"This most excellent work is published under the approbation of many eminent dignitaries of the Catholic Church. We hope to see this most useful book largely circulated throughout the country."

BALTIMORE.—*The Catholic Mirror.*

"It gives us an insight into all the feasts and fasts of the Church during the year, with the gospels and short comments thereon, together with the life of a Saint for each day of the year. The commendations of the Catholic Prelates in favor of this work are very strong. More than this it is needless for us to add, *unless it be to hope that it may meet with a generous encouragement from the Catholics in America.*"

BOSTON.—*The Pilot.*

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The Ecclesiastical Year.

PUBLISHED

UNDER THE APPROBATIONS

OF THE FOLLOWING

EMINENT DIGNITARIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

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table glory of the Father, the same is also to be understood undividedly and without distinction of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. We acknowledge, therefore, and believe this sublime Trinity to be one God, because in these three persons exists no distinction of either nature, power, will, or action."

In regard to the relation and action of the Blessed Trinity upon THE WORLD, especially upon MAN, the most superior being of the visible world, divine revelation distinguishes a threefold action of God, or three great works, corresponding to the three divine persons, each one of which works is principally effected by one of the three divine persons; THE CREATION perfected by GOD THE FATHER, the REDEMPTION by GOD THE SON, and the SANCTIFICATION by GOD THE HOLY GHOST. St. Bernard expresses this simply, but definitely, by saying: "The Holy Scriptures speak of a threefold effect of the Most Blessed Trinity, that is, the creation of heaven and earth, the reparation of heaven and earth, and the confirmation of heaven and earth; the Father has created, the Son has repaired or reconciled, the Holy Ghost has confirmed." This, however, is not to be understood as if the three divine persons had divided these three great works among themselves, as men divide several kinds of work with each other, so that each one of the divine persons undertook and perfected His own work alone, and without the co-operation of the two other divine persons. This would be the same as to divide the one inseparable divine nature into several Beings, separated from one another, which contradicts the very idea of the most Blessed and undivided Trinity. The Catholic doctrine of the creation, redemption, and sanctification, through the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is so to be understood, that in the profound meaning concealed in the mystery itself, the work corresponding to each of the divine persons is ascribed to him individually, without excluding the co-operation of the two other persons, so that at each of the three great works—the creation, redemption, and sanctification, the three divine persons, as the undivided divine Being, co-operated with each other. This co-operation is proved in many passages of the Holy Scriptures; for when God the Father created the world out of nothing, by the eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God and who was God Himself, "all things were made, and without Him nothing was made that was made." (John 1 : 1, 2, 3.) In regard to the action of the Holy Ghost at the creation, we read in the beginning of the history of the creation: "And the Spirit of God moved over the waters," Gen. 1 : 2,) that is, to create all from the water, as the first element. In the same manner we see at the second great work, the redemption through the Son of God, which He has effected in a special manner, the co-operation of the most Blessed Trinity.

When the time had come for Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the heavenly Father, to appear in the world, God the Father sent the Archangel Gabriel to announce to the Blessed Virgin Mary, that she should become the Mother of God, and she, according to the assertion of this heavenly messenger,

conceived the Son of God through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Luke 1 : 35.) When our Saviour wished to appear publicly, in order to begin His divine teachings, and when He prepared Himself for it by allowing John to baptize Him, the co-operation of the divine Trinity showed itself again; for the Gospel says: "And Jesus, being baptized, went up presently out of the water: and, behold, the heavens were opened to him: and he saw the Spirit of God descending, as a dove, and coming upon him. And, behold, a voice from heaven, saying; This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3 : 16, 17.) At the transfiguration of Christ the Holy Ghost appeared in a bright cloud, and the voice of the Father was heard as at the baptism of Christ. (Matt. 17 : 5.) In the same manner the co-operation of the Blessed Trinity appeared at the third great work, the sanctification through the Holy Ghost, as the Son of God, according to His promise, has sent to His disciples the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.

The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is not only the most incomprehensible and most inscrutable of mysteries, but at the same time the most sublime and comprehensive, because in a few words it comprises all that the Deity has done for us in those three great works: the creation, the redemption, and sanctification, and because the other mysteries and doctrines of our holy religion, refering necessarily to one of the three divine persons, are contained in it. A great and pious Doctor of the Church therefore says: "One God in three persons—this is the substance of our faith, the foundation of our religion, and the sublimest of all the mysteries. In these three words: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—is the ground and treasure of our faith."

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Tobias 12.

"Blessed be the holy Trinity and undivided Unity; we will give glory to him, because he hath shown his mercy to us. O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is thy name in all the earth. Glory be to the Father."

With these words the Church expresses her profound veneration for the infinite, incomprehensible, triune God, and invites the Faithful with grateful hearts to praise and glorify Him, who is threefold in person, and One in nature, and who has shown to mankind such great mercy in the creation, redemption, and sanctification of the world.

PRAYER.

O Almighty and Eternal God, who hast given to Thy servants to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, in the confession of the true faith, and to adore the Unity in the power of Thy majesty, we beseech Thee, that by firmness in

the same faith, we may be ever protected from all adversities. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—Rom. 11 : 33-36.

"Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and recompense shall be made him? For of him, and by him, and in him, are all things: to him be the glory forever. Amen."

The Church very properly on this day places before us these words of the Apostle, in which he praises in deep veneration the incomprehensible greatness and glory of God, because the mystery, commemorated to-day,—that of the Most Blessed Trinity—is the most incomprehensible of all the mysteries proposed to us for our belief by the Catholic Church. One God in three persons, each person true God, and all three but One inseparable divine Being, is indeed a mystery, incomprehensible to our limited understanding, inexplicable for our human conception, impenetrable even to the greatest ingenuity of human knowledge or science. The Holy Fathers have applied allegories taken from the corporeal as well as from the spiritual world to this incomprehensible mystery, in order, if not to define it, to make it at least as intelligible as possible to the human mind. A beautiful emblem of the Blessed Trinity is THE SUN, presented to us in the Holy Scriptures as the symbol of the Deity, especially of the Son of God (compare Ecclesiastes 1 : 5; Malach. 4 : 2; Apoc. 1 : 16; 7 : 2). If his rays are reflected upon a mirror, and from thence upon clear water, he at one and the same time emits a threefold splendor of brightness, as though it were three different suns. The sun in the heavens signifies GOD THE FATHER, whose throne, according to the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, is the heaven, and who therefore is called THE GOD IN HEAVEN; (Ps. 113 : 3; 1 Esdras 1 : 2; Isaias 66 : 1,) the sun in the mirror signifies the SON OF GOD, who, according to the Holy Scriptures, IS THE BRIGHTNESS OF ETERNAL LIGHT, AND UNSPOTTED MIRROR OF GOD'S MAJESTY AND THE IMAGE OF HIS GOODNESS; (Wisd. 7 : 26,) the sun reflected upon the water is the Holy Ghost, who proceeding from the Father and the Son, dwelleth in the beginning of all time upon the waters. (Genes. 1 : 3.) Another emblem of the Blessed Trinity according to St. Basil, and one not less appropriate and full of meaning, is the rainbow, that wonderful sign in the heavens, where one ray of the sun embellishes a cloud with three different colors, (the primitive colors of the rainbow) and which appeared first after the deluge to Noe and his family, as a sign of the covenant, which the Lord God wished to conclude with the newly created generation. (Genesis 9 : 12–17.) The three principal colors, proceeding from the one ray of the sun, may be very properly referred to the three divine persons: the BLUE COLOR, the

color of the firmament, signifies GOD THE FATHER; by the RED COLOR, like that of blood, is understood GOD THE SON, who by shedding His blood, redeemed the world: and finally by the YELLOW COLOR, which is like that of fire, is meant THE HOLY GHOST, who descended in the form of a fiery tongue upon the first disciples of Christ. Again another symbol of this most sublime mystery is, according to St. Augustine, our own soul, in which we find the three powers: will, memory, and understanding; which, although different from each other, form one and the same substance, corresponding with the three divine persons. St. Dionysius of Alexandria also compares the Blessed Trinity to a fountain, which forms a brook, and then a river, but constitutes together one and the same water.

These and other emblems, however, proposed with great ingenuity by the Holy Fathers, in order to make us comprehend the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity, are nothing but feeble pictures; they never can teach man to understand this most inscrutable of all mysteries. The human mind may arrive at the highest state of cultivation, but it will never penetrate this eternal, infinite and incomprehensible mystery, and after the most profound investigation it will never comprehend and understand it. We read in the life of St. Augustine a remarkable event referring to the above. This most learned of the Holy Fathers, who has with the greatest skill, written and defined many things referring to the dogmas of our holy religion, endeavored to unravel the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity, and to make it as comprehensible as possible to the human mind. One day, while meditating upon this great mystery, he took a walk by the sea-shore, and there saw a child, dipping up water from the sea with a small shell, and emptying it again into a hole he had made in the sand. Upon asking him what he was doing, the child answered: "I mean to empty the water of the sea into this hole." St. Augustine smiled at the simplicity of the child, who then said: "It will be as easy for me with this little shell to empty the sea into this small hole, as for you to succeed in understanding the great mystery upon which you now reflect." The child then disappeared, and the Saint desisted in his efforts to comprehend the wonderful mystery, upon the feebleness of which undertaking the Lord Himself had so miraculously instructed him.

Should the incomprehensibility of this great mystery diminish our faith in it, or destroy it? Should we doubt the doctrine of our Holy Church in regard to the triune God, because we cannot penetrate the immeasurable depth of this most sublime mystery? It would be presumption, it would be folly! Is not the incomprehensibility of God one of his essential attributes, and would God not cease to be the most sublime and most perfect Spirit, if the short-sighted mind of a poor mortal could clearly understand His divine nature? Would it not be presumption, if man, a perishable creature, who cannot comprehend even the most simple phenomena of nature or of his own life in regard to their mutual connection, should insist upon comprehending the mysteries of the invisible,

eternal, and infinite Creator, subjecting as it were the author of reason to the judgment of a limited mind? It is impossible for us now to penetrate into the mysteries of our eternal Creator, for St. John says: "No man hath seen God at any time." (John 1 : 18.) And according to St. Paul, "we see now through a glass in an obscure manner (through faith) but then (faith being changed into intuition) face to face, and shall know Him even as we are known by Hm." (1 Cor. 13 : 12.) Let us therefore consider the words of St. Bernard, in which he says: "An attempt to penetrate the mystery of the Blessed Trinity is to indulge in a sinful curiosity; but to believe and to hold what the Church believes and teaches, is faith and certainty, for to behold the Blessed Trinity will one day be the most perfect and greatest happiness that we can enjoy."

GOSPEL.—Matt. 28 : 18-20.

"At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

Shortly before His ascension, when He appeared to His disciples upon a mount in Galilee, our Saviour gave them the great commission to go through the whole world, to teach all nations, and to receive them into the Church He established, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. In order to give courage and confidence to their great and difficult mission, He at the same time gave them the consoling assurance, that He would be with them forever, without intermission, and that He would protect and assist them with His divine power, although He would not walk among them in His body. This promise was made not only to His disciples, but also to their successors, the Pastors of the Church for all time to come, as Christ expressly says: "EVEN TO THE CONSUMMATION OF THE WORLD," and not in vain He adds: "ALL DAYS," thereby declaring, that He would remain always with His church, and not forsake the Superiors of the Church at any time. Indeed, a great and irrefutable testimony of the durability as well as of the infallibility of the Catholic Church, is the congregation of her superiors under their legitimate head; a testimony alone sufficient to refute and confound all those unhappy persons, who, blinded by the errors of their minds or the malice of their hearts, have left the Catholic Church under the vain pretext that she had fallen into error, and that they would now proclaim to all men the true and pure doctrine of Christ; for if Christ Himself, according to His promise, has remained and will remain with His Church, the Church has not fallen, can never fall into error; but if any one supposes that the Church ever erred, he must also aver, that the Saviour, contrary to His express promise, forsook His Church

at that time, which it would be blasphemy to entertain. It is therefore a great consolation for us to be members of this eternal and infallible Church, protected as she is by her divine founder, Jesus Christ!

The Church proposes this Gospel to us on this Festival principally for the reason that our Saviour Himself expressly declares in it the great dogma of the Blessed Trinity; for, as St. Ambrose truly remarks, although He mentions the three divine persons: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, He says in the NAME, and not in the NAMES, to indicate the difference of the persons and at the same time the unity of the divine nature. According to the express command of Christ, the first of all the holy sacraments, *baptism*, is administered in the name of the Blessed Trinity, so that this sublime mystery introduces man into the kingdom of God upon earth, sanctifying him as it were at the beginning of his Christian life. In the same manner the profession of this mystery accompanies the Christian through his whole life, even until death, since all the other sacred ceremonies of the Catholic Church are, like baptism, performed through the invocation, that is, in the name of the Blessed Trinity. With the sign of the cross, in the name of the triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, commence and end all prayers, the holy sacrifice of the Mass, the proclaiming of the word of God, and all other devotions of the Catholic Church. The holy sacraments are all administered in the name of the Blessed Trinity, all the blessings of the Church are performed with the sign of the cross and in the holy name, and all the hymns of the Church end with the words: "Glory be to the Father, and the Son, and Holy Ghost." Thus the Church celebrates now and forever on each day and at every sacred function, the feast of the most Blessed Trinity, as the compendium of all Feasts, as the beginning and the end of all her faith, hope and charity. Therefore, St. Augustine justly says: "The belief in the most Blessed Trinity is the most precious treasure of our Church. This belief justifies the sinner, sanctifies the just, baptizes the neophytes, crowns the martyrs, and makes the whole world happy."

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—PS. 12.

"Lord, I have trusted in thy mercy, my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing to the Lord, who giveth me good things. How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget me? Unto the end? How long dost thou turn away thy face from me? Glory be to the Father."

This beautiful prayer of the royal prophet, in which he expresses his firm confidence in the mercy of God as also his loving desire for the assistance of the Lord, is proposed to us by the Church on this day, so that in consideration of the proofs of the divine mercy, we may praise and glorify Him with grateful and joyful hearts, and at the same time ask Him with confidence for the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

PRAYER.

O God, the strength of them that hope in Thee, favorably give ear to our supplications, and since, without Thee, mortal infirmity can do nothing, grant the help of Thy grace, that in fulfilling Thy commandments, we may please Thee both in will and action. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—1 John 4 : 8–21.

"Dearly beloved: God is charity. By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live by him. In this is charity: not as though we had loved God, but because he hath first loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. My dearest, if God hath so loved us; we also ought to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abideth in us, and his charity is perfected in us. In this we know that we abide in him, and he in us; because he hath given us of his spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father hath sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God, and we have known, and have believed the charity, which God hath to us. God is charity: and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him. In this is the charity of God perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment: because as he is, we also are in this world. Fear is not in charity: but perfect charity casteth out fear, because fear hath pain. And he that feareth, is not perfected in charity. Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us. If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother: he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not? And this commandment we have from God, that he, who loveth God, love also his brother."

The Church very appropriately, in these words of the disciple of love, instructs us on the most beautiful and most sublime fruit of the Holy Ghost: LOVE, the greatest of all virtues. St. John in the above passage shows us, that God has loved us first, by sending His only-begotten Son to redeem us, so that we should feel bound to love Him in return. He further remarks, that, thus filled with true love towards God, we shall be free from all servile fear, since servile fear proceeds from the consciousness of sin and its punishment, but he

who truly loves God, carefully avoids sin, possessing therefore a child-like fear of God, that is, he hates evil, in order not to offend Him. Finally, the Apostle teaches us, that if we wish to love God truly, we should at the same time love our neighbor, since both are necessarily connected with each other, as without loving our neighbor we cannot love God. (Matt. 22 : 39.)

GOSPEL.—Luke 6 : 36–42.

"At that time Jesus said to his disciples: Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again. And he spoke also to them a similitude: Can the blind lead the blind? do they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master: but every one shall be perfect, if he be as his master. And why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye: but the beam that is in thy own eye thou considerest not. Or how canst thou say to thy brother: Brother, let me pull the mote out of thy eye, when thou thyself seest not the beam in thy own eye? Hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thy own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye."

The Gospel of to-day, taken from a part of Christ's sermon on the mountain, very appropriately connects with the Epistle of to-day, for our Lord instructs us in regard to the great commandment of love, mentioning three special points, containing the principal obligations toward our neighbor, and which, taken together, constitute the true and perfect observance of the great commandment of love toward our neighbor.

The FIRST precept given by our Saviour in relation to the love of our neighbor, is: "Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful." These words contain generally our duty towards our neighbor, which is to be kind and merciful, thus showing true charity. St. John says: "My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3 : 18.) To urge us to this true and active charity, benignity, kindness and mercy toward our neighbor, our Saviour points first to the example of God His heavenly Father, by adding: "AS YOUR FATHER ALSO IS MERCIFUL." Our Saviour means to say, God our heavenly Father is kind and merciful toward men; innumerable and great are the benefits which He gives for both body and soul; for all the good things which men possess and enjoy, they owe to the kindness of God. Should not this great love of God toward us incite us to be charitable and merciful toward our neighbor? Should we not then especially, when we have received more than we can use, freely give of our abundance to others,

who suffer want and distress? Otherwise we make ourselves unworthy of the great kindness and mercy which the Lord has shown us, and continues to show. At the same time, however, our Saviour draws our attention to the fact, that we are to expect God's mercy in the same measure as we show charity and mercy to our neighbor. He says: "With the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."

With these words of our Saviour corresponds another passage, in which He says, that at the last judgment the Just shall receive eternal reward on account of their works of mercy, but the wicked shall receive eternal punishment on account of having neglected those works. He the eternal Judge shall say then to the former: "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me;" and to others: "As long as you did it not to one of these least ones, neither did you do it to me." (Matt. 25 : 40–45.)

The SECOND precept of Christ regarding charity toward our neighbor, is: "Judge not and you shall not be judged;" which has reference to what we should not do toward our neighbor. The reason, however, that among the many and different offences, which we can inflict upon our neighbor, our Saviour makes special mention of uncharitable judgment and condemnation of others, is, because this sin is committed most frequently, and because by this uncharitable reproach, judgment and condemnation, our fellow-men receive the greatest loss. Honor and a good name are the greatest good man has upon earth; "a good name," says the wise man, "is better than great riches;" (Prov. 22 : 1,) and yet this precious good is easily injured by uncharitable judgment and by prejudice, and not seldom entirely destroyed. To warn us against this sin, which is so much opposed to fraternal charity, our Saviour promises, that if we think with kindness and forbearance of others, we shall find mercy before God, for He adds: "You shall not be judged, you shall not be condemned," and at the same time proposes to us the parable of the two blind men, and of the mote and the beam. By the first—the two blind men,—He teaches, that one who is himself ignorant and wicked, is not fit to teach or correct others, since the scholar cannot be better than the master. By the other similitude, however, He shows us how unjust it is for us to reproach and condemn our neighbor for a small fault (a mote), when we, perhaps, have committed the most grievous sins (beams): far better then is it to remove our own serious transgressions, before we attempt to free others from their comparatively small faults. St. Paul teaches the very same, by saying: "Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest. For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: for thou doest the same things which thou judgest" (Rom. 2 : 1); and in another place: "Every one of us shall render account to God for himself; let us not, therefore, judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that you put not a stumbling-block or a scandal in your brother's way." (Rom. 14 : 12, 13.)

The THIRD precept of Christ finally speaks of the injuries and offences which we have to endure in patience from our fellow-beings; we must forgive them, and not revenge ourselves upon them, but that according to the Apostle, revenge should be left to God. "Revenge not yourselves, my dearly beloved, but give place to wrath; for it is written: Revenge is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." (Rom. 12 : 19.) Our Saviour explains more fully this commandment of loving our neighbor, extending this charity and forgiveness even to our enemies and those that offend us, in another passage of his sermon on the mount, saying: "Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you; that you may be the children of your Father, who is in heaven: who maketh his sun to rise upon the good, and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if you love those that love you, what reward shall you have? do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? do not also the heathens the same? Be you, therefore, perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5 : 44–48; Luke 6 : 27, 28.)

Our Saviour, as He has done in the first precept of mercy, so here also in that of forgiveness, refers us to the example of His heavenly Father, who, although so often and grievously offended by man, is ready at all times to forgive those that offend Him, and bestows even upon the wicked, who continually sin against Him, the benefits and blessings of His paternal care. We should therefore endeavor to imitate this example of our heavenly Father, to whose perfections we should in like manner strive to become equal, since our love towards our enemies is not only the true measure of our love towards our fellow-men, but also because we ourselves are, by the sins with which we incessantly offend God our heavenly Father, in need of his forbearance and forgiveness, in order not to lose our souls. For this reason we daily pray according to the instruction received by Christ, in the most beautiful of all prayers, which He Himself has taught us: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." (Matt. 6 : 12.)

St. Ambrose gives us the following excellent instruction on this point: "If your brother has not offended you, he deserves your love; if, however, he has offended you, do good to him; for this is the perfection of Christianity, that we love those who love us, and are patient and forbearing with those who offend us."

FESTIVAL OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

THE Feast of to-day is unquestionably one of the most sublime and glorious of the whole ecclesiastical year; it is, as it were, a feast of the greatest triumph for our holy Church,—it is the wedding-feast celebrated by the Church, the beloved spouse of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, with her heavenly bridegroom; for this feast has been instituted in commemoration of the great mystery of the infinite love, which the Son of God for all time left to His Church, of the most precious treasure which He has confided to her; that is, in commemoration of the institution of the great and unbloody sacrifice of the new law (the holy Mass), and of the most blessed Eucharist. By this great mystery of His love, our Saviour always remains most intimately and inseparably united with His Church. He thus dwells without interruption in the midst of His believing people, so that the Church for all time possesses in this most holy mystery the real and substantial presence of her heavenly bridegroom together with His divinity and humanity, for the blessing and salvation of her faithful children, since He offers Himself every day anew in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, although in an unbloody manner, for the salvation of mankind, and even gives Himself in the most holy sacrament as a nourishment for their souls, so that they may be most intimately united with Him, their Saviour and Redeemer. This great mystery is therefore to be justly considered as the most sublime and important act of our whole religion; it is the centre and the soul, as it were, of all the feasts celebrated by the Church. As this mystery has from the earliest time of Christianity been daily celebrated in the Church, because the faithful, at least in the first centuries, attended Mass daily, receiving holy communion also at the same time; as the sacrifice of the Mass is still daily offered up (except on Good-Friday) in all the Catholic churches, and as it is the principal ceremony on all, even the greatest festivals,—we may therefore justly say, that like the feast of the blessed Trinity, Corpus Christi is daily celebrated in our churches. "All festivals," says St. Chrysostom, "are festivals in honor of this divine sacrifice; if we commemorate the feast of a martyr or of any other Saint, if we celebrate a feast on a Friday, or on a Saturday, or on a Sunday, the same sacrifice is offered. Although great festivals are especially distinguished by the richness of the vestments used on the occasion and by the decorations of the altar, as well as by the unusual concourse of people, the divine sacrifice which is offered up, nevertheless, gives them their whole solemnity and dignity."

This was undoubtedly the reason why our holy Church in the earliest times did not institute a particular feast in honor of this sublime mystery. It should properly be celebrated on Holy Thursday, the day of its institution: but the

grief of the Church mourning with her suffering bridegroom, whose sorrow commenced on that day, prevented the joyful and solemn celebration which its dignity demanded. For more than one thousand years no special feast existed in commemoration of the institution of the most holy Sacrament, until God Himself, foreseeing the many objections that would be raised by wicked men against this great mystery of His love, by a wonderful revelation caused the institution of the festival of Corpus Christi, to increase the veneration of the most blessed Sacrament and confirm Christians in their belief and love towards this sublime mystery.

As the Almighty on so many other occasions employed the poor and humble to accomplish His great designs, so likewise did he, in His providence, act in the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi.

A pious virgin, Blessed Juliana Falconieri, born in the village of Bitennes, near Liege (Belgium,) was a nun in the convent of St. Cornelius, distinguished for all Christian virtues, but especially for her devotion towards the most blessed Eucharist. She one day had an extraordinary vision; she saw the full moon in all its splendor, but with a dark spot upon its disk. The pious virgin, fearful of a temptation to pride by Satan, endeavored in every way, especially by prayer and mortification, to remove the vision; but it constantly returned. Almighty God finally revealed to her in answer to her fervent prayers, that the full moon signified the Church, but the dark spot the want of a special feast in honor of the most holy Eucharist. At the same time the Lord revealed to her, that He had chosen her to effect, with the co-operation of the Pastors of the Church, the institution of such a feast, whose object was, to venerate in an extraordinary manner the most blessed Eucharist, and to atone by public and solemn adoration for the injuries offered by heretics to this sublime mystery. The humble servant of God was confounded at this commission, and although she no longer doubted that this revelation had come from God, she still out of humility kept silence for twenty years, and endeavored by increasing her devotion towards the most holy Eucharist, to satisfy in some manner what the heavenly bridegroom seemed to demand from His Spouse, the Catholic Church.

Elected Prioress of the convent in the year 1220, she felt called upon to make known what had been revealed to her. She first mentioned it to a very pious Canon of the church of St. Martin, Liege, and asked him to assist her in fulfilling the divine commission. This Canon revealed what had been told him, to Robert, Bishop of Liege, who in the beginning was not willing to listen to it; but when he had considered the matter with several pious Bishops and other learned theologians, he determined, in accordance with their opinion, to introduce a feast in honor of the most blessed Sacrament into his diocese in the year 1246. His death, however, delayed the introduction of this feast for some time, until Hugo, the Papal Legate, who had been previously the Provincial of the

Dominicans at Liege, returning from a mission, published the decree of the deceased Bishop, and he himself for the first time celebrated the feast in the church of St. Martin at Liege. Blessed Juliana had the consolation of seeing this feast celebrated with great solemnity and devotion throughout the whole diocese of Liege.

The example of the Bishop was soon followed by several other neighboring Bishops, who celebrated this feast for several years, before it was universally introduced into the Church. This was done, however, a few years afterwards by Pope Urban IV. who, when Arch-deacon of the Cathedral of Liege, had urged the introduction of the feast. By his brief, issued in the year 1264, he extended the celebration of this feast to the whole Church, and appointed the Thursday after Pentecost for its celebration. (At present it is celebrated one week later, on Thursday after Trinity-Sunday.) In this brief the Holy Father thus speaks of this festival: "Although the feast of the most holy Sacrament is celebrated every day, it seems meet to us to appoint a day upon which it shall be annually celebrated, if for no other reason than to confound the wickedness and fury of the heretics. The Church celebrates on Holy Thursday, on which day Christ instituted this Sacrament, the commemoration of this mystery, but she is filled with grief on account of the approaching death of her bridegroom, and is also so much occupied with other ceremonies, that she cannot give the necessary attention to a feast which should be celebrated with such holy joy and extraordinary splendor, as to excite in us feelings of gratitude for possessing the true body of Christ, our Saviour and our God. In order, therefore," continues the Pope, "to encourage and animate the belief of Christians in this most sublime mystery, we decree, that besides the honor, which is daily shown to him, a special feast shall be every year celebrated with all the splendor, solemnity, and pomp, due to the sacred body of Christ, in which dwells the fullness of divinity. On this day priests and people should vie with one another, in evincing by public veneration and hymns of praise their living faith and fervent devotion to this great mystery."

On the death of Pope Urban IV. which occurred in the same year, the celebration of Corpus Christi was discontinued for about forty years, until Pope Clement V. in the year 1311, confirmed the brief of Pope Urban IV. at the general synod of Vienne, in, France, and by publishing a new one, established Corpus Christi as a universal festival in the Catholic Church.

From that time it has been celebrated throughout the Catholic world with the greatest splendor and with extraordinaay solemnity; it ranks as a festival of the first class, and has an octave. The principal feature of this feast is the public and solemn procession, which is made with the utmost pomp, and in which our Saviour, really and substantially present in the most holy Sacrament, is carried around as in triumph over his enemies. The Church desires by this procession to celebrate the victory of her heavenly bridegroom. She desires to

give an opportunity to the faithful, publicly to venerate and worship their God, concealed in the most holy Eucharist; inviting, as it were, all created beings to sing hymns of joy and praise in honor of their Creator and Lord. During the procession, benediction of the blessed Sacrament is given from four different altars, erected for that purpose in four different places outside of the church, in order to obtain God's blessing for the city and the country, and for all the people; at each station the beginning of one of the four Gospels is sung, to typify the preaching of the Gospel, the good tidings of the redemption through Christ, to all men upon earth, "in all the creation that is under heaven" (Coloss. 1 : 23); and also publicly to testify our belief in the doctrines of Christ, especially that of the most blessed Sacrament of the Altar, which is uniformly announced by the four Evangelists.

During the octave of this feast, the blessed Sacrament is exposed for adoration in the church, and an opportunity is given to the faithful to show their faith and veneration toward this sublime mystery.

It is worthy of remark that the last general council of Trent, speaking of the veneration due to the most blessed Sacrament (especially on this feast), says: "There is no reason why all Christians should not show to the blessed Sacrament, according to the custom existing in the Catholic Church, the veneration which is due to the true God. It is not less worthy of adoration, because Christ instituted it for our nourishment, since we believe that in it the same God is present, whom the eternal Father sent into the world, saying: 'Let all the angels of God adore Him,' (Ps. 96 : 7; Hebr. 1 : 6,) whom the magi, falling down, adored (Matt. 2 : 11): and finally who, according to the Holy Scriptures, was adored, after His resurrection, by His Apostles in Galilee. (Matt. 28 : 17; Luke 24 : 52.) At the same time the sacred council decrees, that from pious and holy motives the custom has been introduced into the Church of God, of celebrating every year the institution of this sublime and venerable Sacrament in a solemn manner on a specified day, and that it shall be carried in procession through the streets and public places with every mark of respect; for it is only just, that some holy day should be instituted, on which Christians can express their unbounded thankfulness towards our common Lord and Redeemer for such an inexpressible and truly divine gift, in which the victory and the triumph of His death is represented; and it is but right, that truth should triumph over error and heresy, so that its opponents, in witnessing the great splendor and solemn joy of the whole Church, may either grow pale and be awe-struck, or else, overcome with shame acknowledge their error and be converted to the faith of Christ."

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 80.

"He fed them with the fat of wheat, alleluia; and filled them with honey

out of the rock, alleluia, alleluia. Rejoice to God our helper, sing aloud to the God of Jacob. Glory be to the Father."

These words of the royal prophet, referring first to the miraculous preservation of the Israelites in the desert, and then to the blessing of crops, which God so abundantly bestowed on them, the Church very properly applies on this day in a higher and spiritual sense to the heavenly bread, which the Lord in the new law has given to Christians, His chosen people, in the most blessed Sacrament, by nourishing them with His own flesh and blood; the Church therefore, exhorts the faithful to thank and praise the Lord for this great wonder of His Omnipotence and benignity.

PRAYER.

O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament hast left us a memorial of Thy passion, grant us, we beseech Thee, so to reverence the sacred mysteries of Thy body and blood, that we may ever perceive within us the fruit of Thy redemption, through Christ.

EPISTLE.—1 Cor. 11 : 24–29.

"Brethren: For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you: that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said: Take ye and eat, this is my body which shall be delivered for you: this do for the commemoration of me. In like manner also the chalice, after he had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until he come. Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord."

This Epistle is intimately connected with the Gospel of to-day. The latter contains the promise of the most holy Eucharist by our Saviour; the former, however, its real institution, together with the necessary preparation to receive it worthily; it will be therefore more appropriate to explain both—the Epistle and the Gospel—in their connection with each other, that is, in the succession of events which they contain.

GOSPEL.—John 6 : 56–59.

"At that time, Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews: My flesh is meat

indeed: and my blood is drink indeed: he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live forever."

The great mystery, for the celebration of which the feast of to-day has been instituted—the SACRIFICE OF THE NEW LAW, that is, OF THE MASS, and the MOST HOLY EUCHARIST, inseparably united therewith, (because prepared during the elevation of the holy Mass,) was typified and announced in various ways in the old law. The holy sacrifice of the Mass was represented by the burnt-offerings and oblations, ordained by Almighty God Himself among the Israelites. At these sacrifices only animals were offered, that is, their blood was shed and their flesh either burned or eaten. These victims had a sanctifying virtue, not of themselves, but only as types of the great sacrifice of Christ. (Compare Hebr. 9.) The most appropriate type, however, of the holy sacrifice of the Mass in the old law was the sacrifice of Melchisedech, king of Salem, or Jerusalem, who after a victory obtained by Abraham, offered up bread and wine. (Gen. 14 : 18.) The royal prophet David uttered an important prophecy concerning this offering of Melchisedech, as typifying the sacrifice of the new law, to be instituted by Christ, saying in spirit to our Saviour: "The Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent: Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." (Ps. 109 : 4.) From this passage alone it is evident, that according to the express declaration of the Holy Scriptures, Christ intended to institute a sacrifice to be offered up not only by Himself, but by all His successors—the priests of the Church—a sacrifice, in which bread and wine are used, corresponding in this respect with that of Melchisedech.

This sacrifice He did institute, and the priests of the Catholic Church continue to offer up the same oblation, and will continue to do so until the end of the world. The prophet Malachy, the last of the Prophets of the new law, also refers to the unbloody sacrifice of the New Testament to be instituted by Christ, in the following manner: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts: and I will not receive a gift of your hands. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the gentiles: and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: for my name is great among the gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts." (Malachy 1 : 10, 11.)

For how could it be proved that this prophecy had been fulfilled (which we must necessarily admit,) and how could it have any meaning, if this pure offering was not understood to be the HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS, the only one which,

corresponding with the above prophecy, is offered up everywhere on the globe among Christians, converted from paganism?

The heavenly food, also, which our Saviour desired to give to the faithful in the most holy Eucharist, (which is inseparably united with the holy sacrifice of the Mass,) as a nourishment to their souls, in order to preserve their spiritual life, was already typified in the old law in different ways. One type of this most blessed Sacrament was the PASCHAL LAMB, which the Israelites were obliged to eat before they left Egypt, and subsequently every year at the Pasch, in commemoration of their wonderful deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Another type of this heavenly food was the manna, that miraculous bread, by which the Lord preserved the Israelites for forty years in the desert. (Compare Exodus 16.) The show-bread or loaves of proposition, twelve in number, corresponding with the twelve tribes of Israel, according to the express command of God, were made out of the finest flour, without leaven. They were placed in two rows, one above the other, and kept separated by plates of gold, in the Holy of Holies, for a memorial of the oblation of the Lord, and were replaced every Sabbath and then consumed in the holy place by the priests. These were also a type of the heavenly bread, which our Lord desired to give to His faithful children for all time. (Compare Exodus 25 : 30; Levit. 24 : 5, 6.)

The positive and distinct promise, however, of this most blessed Sacrament, was made by our Saviour Himself, after his first miraculous multiplication of the loaves in the desert, which He performed in the second year of His public life, and which is related to us by St. John in the sixth chapter of his Gospel. Our Lord shortly before the feast of Easter miraculously fed with a few loaves and fishes about five thousand persons, who had followed Him in the desert, so that their hunger was satisfied, and the fragments of the loaves and fishes that were left filled seven baskets.

On the next day the people again followed Him, when our Saviour, knowing that they had not come from a desire after truth, but only for temporal purposes, said reproachfully to them: "*Amen, amen, I say to you, you seek me not because you have seen miracles,* (that is, because you believe in Me through the wonders you have seen,) *but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled,* (expecting again perhaps to be miraculously fed.) *Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you.*" (Verses. 26, 27.) And our Lord explains these words even more distinctly by saying, in the course of His address to the people: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me, shall not hunger; and he that believeth in me, shall never thirst." (Verse 35.) When the Jews therefore murmured at Him, Christ said to them with even more precision: "*Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in me, hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert; and they died. This is the bread descending down from heaven; that if any one eat of it, he may not die. I am*

the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread which I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world." (John 6 : 47–52.)

The words of Christ, which expressly declared that the bread of life, of which He had so often spoken, should be His own flesh, provoked the sensual Jews against Him, because they placed a wrong construction upon them. They strove among themselves, saying: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

Christ, however, confirmed His significant words, by pointing at the same time to the wonderful effects of this heavenly food; and this reiteration of His words, is at the same time an irrefutable proof, that He by no means spoke, as the heretics maintain, in a figurative sense, but that the words in which He promised to the faithful His body as food, and His blood as drink, are to be understood in the proper and literal sense. Our Saviour replied to the unbelieving Jews in a truly solemn manner: "*Amen, amen I say unto you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and died. He that eateth this bread, shall live for ever.*" (John 6 : 54–59.)

In this most significant discourse, which He delivered in the synagogue in Capharnaum, our Saviour has clearly and definitely declared that He would institute a sacrament, in which the faithful should receive His flesh and blood, in the fullness of His whole substance; in any other sense these words cannot be understood; for Christ did not then speak in figures or similitudes, but His words are to be taken in a literal sense, because He several times repeated the same words most emphatically, not explaining them in any other manner, although the Jews murmured, and many even of His disciples were scandalized at His words. He therefore said to them, in order to free them from their doubts: "Doth this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (Verse 63.) He wished thereby to say, that His ascension, of which they would soon be witnesses, should give them sufficient evidence of His Divinity, and therefore also of His power to perform this incomprehensible miracle (in the most blessed Sacrament).

These words of our Saviour, according to the opinion of the Holy Fathers, are to be thus interpreted: "My words are not to be understood in a sensual manner, as though I intended to say that my flesh is to be eaten, as meat is usually eaten, or that my blood, which was shed upon the cross, is to be used as drink. My words are to be taken rather in a spiritual sense, so that My flesh

and blood are received truly and substantially, although in a mystical and spiritual manner.

Even when many of His disciples, scandalized at the words of Christ, left Him and walked no more with Him, our Lord gave no other explanation of what He had said—another proof, that His words were to be taken literally and in no other manner. (John 6 : 26, 27.)

This significant promise, made by our Saviour in the synagogue in Capharnaum to the people, was fulfilled shortly before His passion, at the Last Supper.

In a few, simple, but at the same time, clear and distinct words, this important fact is related by the first Evangelists and by St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. (Compare the Passion as read on Good-Friday, and the Epistle of to-day.) When after the Last Supper our Saviour was still sitting at the table with His disciples, He took the bread [which was unleavened bread, according to the precept of the law, (Exodus 12 : 8–18 ; Levit. 23 : 6,)] in His holy hands, gave thanks to His heavenly Father, blessed and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, and said : "Take ye and eat : THIS IS MY BODY, which is given for you ; do this for a commemoration of me." In like manner He took the chalice also, after he had supped, gave thanks, and offered it to His disciples and said : "Drink ye all of this, for THIS IS MY BLOOD of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins ; this do ye, as often as you shall drink it, for the commemoration of me." (Matt. 26 : 26–28 ; Mark 14 : 22–24 ; Luke 22 : 19, 20 ; 1 Cor. 11 : 23–25.) Thus our Saviour, in fulfillment of His former promise, gave to His disciples this food from heaven, HIS OWN MOST PRECIOUS BODY AND BLOOD. What the disciples ate, was, therefore, no longer bread, and what they drank, no longer wine ; but this earthly nourishment, through the Omnipotence of Him, by whom all things were made, and without whom was made nothing that was made, (John 1 : 3,) was in a mysterious manner changed into His body and blood, into the same body in which He had walked for thirty-three years upon earth, and which was soon to be offered up on the altar of the cross ; it was changed into the same blood which had been united with His living body, and which was soon to be shed on the same cross for the redemption of sinful man. This heavenly bread, however, Christ not only administered to His disciples, but in conformity with the prophecies of the old law, He, as HIGH PRIEST ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDECH, instituted the sublime and pure sacrifice of the new law, which should forever be celebrated over the whole globe. He Himself, before administering this mysterious nourishment to His disciples, had first offered up the unbloody sacrifice of His body and His blood : for the sublime act, which He performed after the Last Supper, contained all the marks of a true sacrifice ; for there was present a real oblation, the body of Christ contained in the form of bread, and His blood contained in the form of wine. This oblation was offered up for a

holy object, and then consumed, because Christ, in commemoration of His great love, of His passion and death, had given His body as nourishment to His disciples. By the words, however, which He at the same time spoke to His disciples: "DO THIS FOR A COMMEMORATION OF ME," He commanded them also to do what He had just done before their eyes, that is, to change bread and wine into His body and blood, to take it themselves, and to administer it to the faithful. He had therefore instituted the unbloody sacrifice of the new law, the HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS, which according to the prophecies of the old law, should be everywhere offered up to the heavenly Father, until the end of the world, from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof, from the north to the south, in commemoration of the great and bloody sacrifice of the cross, in commemoration of the infinite love shown thereby to mankind, and to renew forever in an unbloody manner the sacrifice which He Himself had once offered up in a bloody manner. Referring to this, St. Paul says: "For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come." (That is, to judgment, at the end of time.) (1 Cor. 11 : 26.) With the sacrifice of the new law, however, He also instituted the PRIESTHOOD of the new law (which even according to the old law was inseparably united with sacrifice). He therefore had by the words: "DO THIS FOR A COMMEMORATION OF ME," elevated the Apostles to the sacred priesthood, and made them at once the dispensers of His great mysteries, (1 Cor. 4 : 1.) High-priests, and BISHOPS: they received at the same time the power to appoint others as their assistants, representatives and successors in office; so that, according to what was foretold by the prophets and Christ's clear intention, the great sacrifice of the new law might be offered up every where in the world, and through all time until the end of the world.

From this it becomes evident, that, as already mentioned, the most blessed Eucharist and the holy sacrifice of the mass are really and inseparably united; that the one without the other is not possible, and that the administration of these great mysteries depends on the priesthood ordained by the Saviour; that therefore, the Bishops and Priests, who are legitimately ordained in the Church of Christ, are the only successors of the Apostles, and their assistants, and are the only rightful dispensers of the mysteries instituted by Christ.

This great mystery has in the language of the Church different titles, all having their own beautiful meaning. It is called THE SACRIFICE OF THE NEW LAW, or OF THE MASS, when regarded as the MASS, with its three principal parts: the offertory, the elevation (consecration), and the communion. It is called THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR, because the heavenly bread is during Mass prepared upon the altar, and is kept in the tabernacle; it is called THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT, because it gives not only sanctifying grace, but also the source of all sanctity, Jesus Christ. Jt is also called THE LORD'S SUPPER, because it was instituted in the evening by our Lord at the last Supper. It is further called in

some countries, "the feast of love," because it is the surest evidence of the continual love of our Saviour for the faithful: it is called THE FEAST OF THE COVENANT, because it is, as it were, the seal of the New Testament between Christ and the members of His Church. It is called also THE SACRAMENT OF THE BODY OF CHRIST, because it contains the true body of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is called also HOLY COMMUNION, because Christ gives Himself in this Sacrament to all His faithful as a common food, and because the Christian, by partaking of this heavenly bread, becomes one body as it were with Christ. (1 Cor. 10 : 16, 17.) It is called also EUCHARIST, or THANKSGIVING, because it was instituted by Christ when giving thanks; it is received by the faithful with thanksgiving, and it is celebrated in grateful remembrance of the passion and death of Christ. It is finally called VIATICUM, when administered to the sick, and especially to the dying, as the most salutary and strengthening nourishment for their souls on the way to eternity.

According to the words of our Saviour, which He clearly and distinctly pronounced when He gave the promise of the most blessed Sacrament, and again at that most solemn moment, when after instituting it He took leave of His disciples, it is certain beyond all doubt, that in the most blessed Sacrament the true body and the true blood of Christ are contained under the form of bread and wine, so that the faithful in receiving this most blessed Sacrament do not receive bread and wine, but the body and blood of Christ. In the same manner it is certain, that this mysterious change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ does not take place at the moment when we receive the most blessed Sacrament, but immediately upon the words of consecration (during holy Mass) pronounced over the bread and wine. This truth of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the most blessed Eucharist, St. Paul confirms, saying: "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" (1 Cor. 10 : 16.) And again, the same Apostle says: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." (1 Cor. 11 : 27–29.)

Would the Apostle have spoken thus of the most blessed Sacrament of the altar, and especially of the terrible effects of receiving it unworthily, if it were only bread and wine? Are not these two passages, especially when used in connection with the words of Christ, an irrefragable proof, that in this sacrament are really and truly present the body and blood of Christ, and that it is received by the faithful, according to their moral condition, either to eternal life or eternal death?

With these words of the Holy Scripture agree the Doctors of the Church of

all ages. From the first century, in the time of the Apostles, innumerable proofs can be produced from the writings of the most learned and most distinguished fathers of the Church, all of which confirm the unanimous belief and the express doctrine of the Church, that in the most holy Eucharist our Saviour Jesus Christ Himself is truly and really present.

Thus, in the first century writes St. Ignatius, martyr, a disciple of St. John the Evangelist, in his Epistle to the Christians of Philadelphia, a city in Asia Minor: "I conjure you to have but one faith, one doctrine, and one communion; for there is but one body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and but one blood shed for us, and but one chalice, from which we can drink; but one bread, which is broken for us, but one Altar for the whole Church, and but one Bishop with the priests and deacons, my co-laborers."

In his epistle to the Christians of Smyrna he writes: "The heretics withdraw from the communion and prayer, because they do not confess that the communion is the body of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the same body which suffered for our sins and rose from the dead. Whoever denies this grace of God, shall die in his contradiction." And in his epistle to the Romans, he says: "I desire no perishable food, I desire the bread of God, the bread of heaven, the bread of life, which is the body of Jesus Christ the Son of God; I desire to drink His blood,—it is imperishable love, it is eternal life."

In the SECOND century, St. Justin, martyr, writes in his first apology for the Christians to the Roman emperor Antoninus: "We receive the sacred bread not as common bread, or as common drink; but, as Jesus Christ became man through the word of God, and took to Himself flesh and blood for our salvation, we are instructed, that this food, which nourishes our flesh and blood, is through the prayer containing His words, changed into the flesh and blood of the God-man; for the Apostles relate to us in their writings, which are called Gospels, that Christ had so commanded them; that He Himself, after having taken the bread and given thanks, said: 'THIS IS MY BODY. DO THIS IN COMMEMORATION OF ME.' In like manner, that, after He had taken the chalice and given thanks, He said: 'THIS IS MY BLOOD;' and He gave to them alone the power of doing what He did."

In the same century, St. Irenæus in his work against the heretics thus writes of the unbloody sacrifice of the new law: "The Lord, by commanding His disciples to offer up to God the firstlings of His creatures, not that He was in want of them, but that they themselves (the disciples) might profit by it and might not appear to be ungrateful, took what according to creation is bread, gave thanks, and said: THIS IS MY BODY. In like manner our Saviour declared also the chalice, which according to human opinion is His creature, to be His blood, and TAUGHT THE SACRIFICE OF THE NEW LAW, WHICH THE CHURCH HAS RECEIVED FROM THE APOSTLES, and which she offers up to God throughout the whole world." And again he says, in the same work: "Therefore the sacrifice

of the Church, which the Lord commanded to be offered up in the whole world, is considered to be a clear oblation before God, and it is pleasing to Him."

In the THIRD century, Clement of Alexandria writes: "The Lord gives us this food; He gives us His own flesh and blood; we should lay aside the old wickedness of the flesh, and partaking of another, a new food of Christ, receive Him in our heart, in order to control our passions."

In the same century Origen writes: "If you receive this holy and imperishable food, if you partake of the bread and chalice of life, you eat and drink the body and blood of the Lord, and the Lord enters under your roof."

In the FOURTH century, St. Cyril of Jerusalem writes: "Since the Lord Himself says of the bread: THIS IS MY BODY, who shall dare to doubt it? And since He Himself gave the assurance: THIS IS MY BLOOD, who shall doubt and say, that it is not His blood? By His will He changed water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana, and should He not now be believed, when He has changed wine into His blood? We receive it as the body and blood of Christ; for under the form of bread is given you His body, and under the form of wine His blood; do not look upon it as mere bread and wine, for it is the body and blood of Christ, according to the declaration of the Lord; and although it seems to the eye to be but bread and wine, yet your faith should convince you that it is the body and blood of Christ; do not judge according to the taste, but rest assured that you have received the body and blood of Christ, and that what seems to be bread and has the taste of bread, is not bread, but the body of Christ; and what appears to be wine and has the taste of wine, is not wine, but the blood of Christ." St. Ambrose, living in the same century, treats the subject in a like manner, refuting at the same time the doubts and objections against the possibility of this mysterious change: "This bread is bread before the mysterious words of the consecration, but through the consecration it is changed into the body of Christ. How can what was bread become the body of Christ? Through the very words of consecration; for what and whose are the words of consecration? They are the words of Christ. All other words, preceding the consecration in the holy mass, are words said by the priest, in praise of God, or are the prayers for the people; but when through the consecration the blessed Sacrament is to be perfected, the priest uses not his own, but the words of Christ: the word of Christ, therefore, perfects the sacrament. And what power has not the word of Christ? The Lord spoke and the world was made; the Lord commanded, and the seas were made; the Lord willed, and all creatures were called to life. You see, therefore, how effective is the word of Christ. Now, if the word of our Lord Jesus Christ possesses such power, that uncreated things were called into existence by Him, how much more does He not possess the power to change that which already existed, into another substance? The heavens were not, the seas were not, the earth was not; but listen to what David says: 'He spoke, and they were made; He commanded, and they were

created.' (Ps. 148 : 5.) In the same way I answer you: Before the consecration the body of Christ was not; but after the consecration, believe me, the body of Christ is present; for He spoke, and it was made; He commanded, and it was created." In another place the same great Doctor of the Church says: "You say, perhaps: I see something else; how can you assure me, that I receive the body of Christ? It is certainly not what nature has formed, but what the blessing (of divine grace) has sanctified; for this blessing has more power than nature, because through Him even nature is changed. Thus Moses held the rod in his hand; he threw it down, and it was changed into a serpent; he then took hold of the serpent, and it was again changed into the rod. The rivers of Egypt contained pure water; but suddenly (at the command of Moses) blood streamed forth from their different sources, so that the waters of the rivers were no longer fit to drink; and again, upon the command of the prophet, blood ceased to run, and the nature of water returned. (Exod. 7.) The incarnation also of Christ corroborates the truth of this mystery; for did the usual order of nature precede the birth of Christ from Mary? The Virgin brought forth her divine Son contrary to the usual law of nature. And this body, which we offer up in the sacrament, is the same one born of the Virgin; why then do you here, in the sacrament, demand the order of nature, since the same Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin contrary to the order of nature? It is, therefore, the true body of Christ, which was crucified and buried; it is in truth the sacrament of the same body."

In the same century St. Augustine writes on the sublime sacrifice of the new law: "The Israelites, in their sacrifices of animals, which they offered up to God, celebrated in a manifold manner the prophecy of the future sacrifice, which Christ in the fullness of time offered up. The Christians now celebrate the commemoration of that sacrifice, already offered up, by offering and partaking of the body and blood of Christ." And again he says: "Our Lord Jesus Christ is, according to the order of Melchisedech, our Priest forever, who has offered Himself up as an oblation for our sins, and has commanded us to offer up another sacrifice similar to His own, so that what Melchisedech has offered up to God, should be offered up in the Church of Christ throughout the world."

The first general Council of Nice (in the year 325), speaks in the same manner of this great mystery: "We must not fix our attention upon the bread and the chalice, which are to be offered up upon this holy table (altar), but we must elevate our spirit, and through faith, recognize the Lamb of God, lying upon the table, which takes away the sins of the world, and which in an unbloody manner is offered up by the priests; and in truly receiving His precious body and blood we must firmly believe that it is the token of our resurrection."

Since, according to the words of Christ, His living body is wholly and substantially present under the form of bread, and His living blood under the form of wine, it naturally follows, that under each of the forms and appearances our

Lord is wholly and entirely present with His body and blood, because the living body cannot be imagined without the blood, nor the living blood without the body; it is therefore evident, that the effects of receiving the blessed Sacrament under one form are the same as if both had been received. This has been already confirmed by the words of St. Paul, in which he speaks of unworthily receiving only one of both species: "*Whosoever shall eat this bread*, OR *drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily*, shall be guilty of the body AND *of the blood of the Lord.*" To receive the most blessed Eucharist under one species only, under that of bread, as the Church in her Latin service for important reasons directs in all cases,—with the exception of the priest, who in offering up the holy sacrifice of the Mass, has even since the earliest time of Christianity received both species,—is therefore in no way, as the enemies of our holy Church maintain, a mutilation of the most blessed Sacrament, nor a loss for the faithful, but only a difference in the outward form, and in fact the whole Sacrament is received. This regulation is not against the precept of our Lord, for in no place did He command that the faithful SHOULD receive the most blessed Eucharist under both forms; it is even very probable, that our Lord Himself one day administered the blessed Sacrament to two of His disciples at Emmaus, under the species of bread only (See explanation of the Gospel on Easter-Monday).

The words of our Saviour, however, which the opponents of our Church adduce as a reason for their anti-Catholic belief, are those in which He says to His disciples when giving them the chalice: "TAKE AND DRINK YE ALL OF THIS." These words, when taken in connection with His discourse, do not at all justify this erroneous opinion, because these words, like the others: "DO THIS IN COMMEMORATION OF ME," were addressed to the Apostles only, and to their rightful successors in office, who were appointed and authorized by our Lord as priests, to repeat the same important act. And this command of the Lord, to receive the blessed Sacrament also under the species of wine, has always been observed by them, whenever they offered up the holy sacrifice of the Mass; but to the faithful it cannot be applied. If, however, from the above words of Christ, we should deem it an obligation for all the faithful to receive holy communion under both species, we should, if consistent, also deduce from the other words of Christ the obligation for all the faithful to offer up the sacrifice of the new law; they would therefore all be obliged to become priests, which would be contrary not only to the nature of the sacrifice, but to the express teachings of the Holy Scriptures, and to the rules introduced by God Himself even in the old law among His worshipers.

It is true, that in the first centuries, at the solemn gatherings of the faithful in the church, it was usual to administer HOLY COMMUNION UNDER BOTH SPECIES even to the laity, but it would be wrong to infer from this usage the NECESSITY of receiving under both forms; for it can be proved by the history

of the Church, that on many occasions even in the first centuries the most blessed Sacrament was administered to the faithful under but one species, that of bread. This was done with the sick, with prisoners, with those of the faithful who took the blessed Sacrament to their homes, or when they went on journeys; in the same manner also on Good-Friday, when the officiating priest exclusively receives the host consecrated on the previous day. It can also be easily explained, how at the spreading of the Catholic Church throughout different countries and at the increasing numbers of Christians, the more simple manner of administering the blessed Sacrament under the species of bread alone became more and more in use, and finally the general custom. The danger of spilling the precious blood,—which danger increased by the immense concourse of the faithful,—the natural antipathy in many, especially the sick, to wine; the difficulty of preserving it after consecration, the still greater difficulty of getting it pure and unadulterated (particularly in northern regions), but especially the desire of the Church, to disclaim the heretics, who maintained that the drinking of the chalice was necessary for the receiving of the whole sacrament;—all these reasons induced the Church to introduce the custom of receiving the blessed Sacrament only under one species. After this custom of administering the holy communion had been adopted for many centuries, at least in the West, the Church, in opposition to the Hussites, who maintained that the use of the chalice at the holy communion was necessary also for the laity, and who attacked the Church on account of the usage of administering the Sacrament under only one form, was induced to pass a canon at the Council of Constance, in the year 1415, that holy Communion should be administered to the faithful only under one form, that of bread, which law has since obtained.

If, therefore, according to the express words of the Holy Scriptures and the unvarying tradition of the holy Fathers, it is certain beyond all doubt, that we receive in the holy Eucharist the true body and the true blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that we receive Him in the fullness of His divinity. O how shall we be able to prize this great mystery of His love—how comprehend it,—how conceive it in its whole magnitude! "O venerable mystery!"—exclaims St. Cyril, "O, inexpressible decree of God! O condescension, which no mind can comprehend! O, inscrutable kindness! The Creator gives Himself as food to the creature, the life of the world gives Himself to mortals as meat and drink! To what dignity above all other people are we raised, who enjoy the grace of partaking of this heavenly feast!" St. Thomas, in reference to this, says very truly: "The immeasurable benefits of divine liberality, which have been bestowed upon the Christian people, gives them an invaluable dignity; for there never was nor will be a people who were so near the Deity, as is our God with us. The only-begotten Son of God, by making us partakers of His divinity, has assumed our nature. He became man, in order to make men

gods, as it were. And whatever He has taken from our nature, He used entirely for our salvation. He then upon the altar of the cross, offered up His body to God the Father in atonement for our sins. He shed His blood as a ransom and a laver of regeneration, that we may be freed from servitude, and cleansed from our sins; but in order also that a continual memorial of such a benefit may remain among us, He has left to the faithful His body as food, and His blood as drink, so that they may receive it under the form of bread and wine."

And what blessed effects must not this heavenly food produce in the soul of man, when worthily received! "No sacrament," says St. Thomas, "is so beneficial as this; sins are washed away, virtue increases, and the soul is enriched with the fullness of grace. It is offered in the Church for the living and the dead, so that what has been instituted for the salvation of all, may be profitable to all. No one can express the loveliness of this Sacrament, in which the spiritual sweetness of its source is tasted, and in which the memory of the infinite love which Christ revealed in His passion, is again renewed." United with Christ, the source of life and happiness, remaining in Him and He in us, and according to St. Cyril melted as it were into Him, as liquid wax melts together:—how could we thus united, be in want of any spiritual blessing, how could any evil befall us, as long as we remain in Him? How could death itself terrify us, when we possess Him, the eternal life itself, He, in whose communion we live forever?

But what a pure and sanctified heart is required to receive Him, the Purest and most Holy! What a careful preparation must we make worthily to receive our salvation in this most blessed Sacrament! St. Chrysostom, in reference to this, justly says: "How pure and clean must not the mouth be, which shall be filled with spiritual fire! How clean the tongue, which is colored with the sacred blood! What the angels, trembling, look upon with awe and veneration, on account of the splendor issuing from it, with the same are we fed, with the same are we united, and we are one body and one flesh with Christ." Not in vain does St. Paul utter these most significant words: "LET MAN PROVE HIMSELF, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD AND DRINK OF THE CHALICE; FOR HE THAT EATETH AND DRINKETH UNWORTHILY, EATETH AND DRINKETH JUDGMENT TO HIMSELF, NOT DISCERNING THE BODY OF THE LORD." What an earnest warning! This heavenly bread, which as the most precious nourishment for our souls, should secure to us eternal life, becomes as it were a deadly poison! it will be our eternal destruction, if we receive it unworthily or without due preparation. And who is the mortal man, who, even after a most careful preparation, is worthy to approach this sacred table of the Lord? Who could be pure enough to receive Him, the most Holy? With deep significance then does the Church call upon the faithful, before receiving the most blessed Sacrament, in humble acknowledgment of their unworthiness, to repeat the words of the centurion of

Capharnaum: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed." (Compare Matt. 8 : 8.)

As often then, as we desire to receive the most blessed Sacrament, we should consider for our warning, but also for our consolation and for the renewal of our confidence, the beautiful words of St. Cyril, in which he says: "When will you be worthy to receive Christ? For if you are unworthy on account of your sins, and if you desist not from sinning—for who can understand sins? says the royal prophet, (Ps. 18 : 13,)—you will be entirely deprived of this means of sanctification. Cultivate, therefore, holy desires in your heart, endeavor to live a pious and holy life, and you will receive those blessings, which will not only destroy death, but also all the diseases of the soul; for if Christ remains in us, He will overcome the spirit of opposition within us, He will strengthen our piety, dispel the anguish of our soul, cure our diseases, heal our wounds, and lift us up from every fall, like a good shepherd, who gives his life for his sheep."

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 17.

"The Lord became my protector, and he brought me forth into a large place; he saved me because he was well pleased with me. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my firmament, and my refuge, and my deliverer. Glory be to the Father."

These words of the royal prophet, in which he gives thanks to the Lord for having delivered him from the hands of Saul and his other enemies, and in which he expresses his love and confidence towards his greatest benefactor and deliverer, the Catholic Church, during the Octave of Corpus Christi, very justly applies to the assistance and deliverance which we have received from our Saviour in even greater dangers, in the dangers to our soul, from which He delivered us through His sacrifice upon the cross, and for having in the most blessed sacrament given us an effective remedy against all the dangers that surround us. This infinite love of our Saviour and Redeemer should incite us to a firm confidence in Him, and to gratitude and love towards Him.

PRAYER.

Grant, O Lord, that we may have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy name, for thou never ceasest to direct and to govern, by thy grace, those whom thou instructest in the solidity of thy love. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—1 John 3 : 13–18.

Dearly beloved: Wonder not, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself. In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother in need, and shall put up his bowels from him: how doth the charity of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in words, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.

This epistle is a continuation of that of last Sunday. The Church here presents for our consideration the beautiful admonition given by St. John, the disciple of love, to practice this great command according to the example of Christ, who is the best model of love towards others. St. John, in the words here given, draws our special attention to the fact that a pure Christian love towards our brethren is a mark of election to eternal life; but on the contrary, that he who does not love his brother, remains in death, and that he who hates his brother, is considered a murderer, and will surely lose eternal life, since hatred is the first step to another, and even greater crime against his neighbor, and not unfrequently leads to murder.

St. Augustine makes some instructive remarks on the words of St. John, that those who love their brethren have passed from death to life. He says: "It is not necessary to ask any one whether we have passed from death to life; let us ask our own hearts: he who finds there charity to his neighbor, may be sure that he has passed from death to life, although no sign of the glory which will follow, is visible in him. The time is not yet, but will come, when the Lord shall appear. The just in this life are like trees in winter; they preserve life in their roots, although the branches seem to be withered and dead. The germ of happiness, although concealed, lives in them, as the leaves and the fruits of the tree are concealed under its bark, waiting only for summer to burst forth in beauty."

GOSPEL.—Luke 14 : 16-24.

At that time, Jesus spoke to the Pharisees this parable: A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. And he sent his servant, at the hour of supper, to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all

things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him, I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them: I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant returning, told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges; and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited, shall taste of my supper."

The beautiful parable in to-day's Gospel treats in general on the calling of mankind through God, our heavenly Father, to participate in the fruits of redemption, perfected by His only-begotten Son, which would be imparted to them through sanctification; but at the same time he warns us against the prevalent indifference of man for his own salvation, evinced in his refusing the graces so kindly offered to him by the Lord, thus wantonly exposing the salvation of his soul. He also admonishes us most earnestly to follow the vocation of God, that, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and using the means of salvation, we may make sure of our election and eternal happiness in the kingdom of heaven.

If we consider the parable in its connection and in its single parts, it can be explained in a different manner; coinciding, however, in the main part, our sanctification and eternal happiness.

First, the great supper, which Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has prepared for His elect, signifies the KINGDOM OF GOD UPON EARTH, to the partaking of which even in the old law, the Jews, as the chosen people of God, were invited through his servants the Prophets. When the hour for the supper had arrived, that is the time when the kingdom of heaven, the CHURCH, (of which Judaism was but a type), should be instituted for the sanctification of man, God sent His servant, that is His only-begotten Son, who for the redemption of man debased Himself, taking the form of a servant (Philipp. 2 : 7), to compel the Jews, who had long since been invited to the supper, to enter into His Church; but leaders, such as the pharisees, highpriests, and scribes, the noble and the rich, all, with a few exceptions, refused, being filled with attachment to the world, with earthly cares and pursuits, with sensual inclinations and desires, so that they all through their own fault lost the grace of the true faith, and with it all hope of possessing eternal happiness. After the Jews, who were the first called, but who refused to appear at the supper of the Lord, that is to enter into the Church of Christ, the lower classes of the people were invited, the Samaritans, and the few Gentiles who lived near by,

who, as spiritually poor, weak, blind, and crippled, are to be understood by "the poor and the feeble, and the blind and the lame;" they accepted more willingly than the first the invitation to the supper of the Lord, to belief in Jesus Christ. Finally the Lord, through the apostles and their successors, invited the Gentiles from all parts of the world (by whom are understood those on the highways and hedges) to His kingdom upon earth, and they also accepted in great numbers the invitation of the Lord, and thus became partakers of the blessings and graces of the Catholic Church, which the Jews had rejected in their infidelity and wickedness.

The supper, however, refers SECONDLY to the KINGDOM OF GOD IN HEAVEN, to the eternal happiness, to which our Lord principally invites those who are in the Church of Christ, but among whom there are many who, filled with earthly cares and sinful inclinations, pay no attention to this divine invitation, and who for paltry fleeting pleasures forfeit their eternal happiness.

THIRDLY, our holy Catholic Church very appropriately applies the parable of the supper to that heavenly feast which the God-man has prepared in His Church as spiritual food for His faithful children, and for this reason, the parable is presented for our consideration during the Octave of Corpus Christi. In this sublime sacrament, the supper of the Lord is daily prepared, and without intermission does He invite the faithful to receive this heavenly food. Many, however, filled with wordly affairs, immersed in temporal cares, and governed by wicked passions, seldom or never accept the benign invitation, so that this feast of the Lord is rejected by the proud and sensual children of the world, and is given only to the humble and truly pious children of God, to whom it will be a means of salvation.

The holy Pope Gregory the Great, in speaking on the parable of to-day, especially in reference to its second meaning (eternal happiness), beautifully remarks: "The Lord God announces the sweetness of the prepared feast, and yet all the invited guests commence at once to excuse themselves. If a rich man were to invite a poor one to his house, what, my brethren, would the poor man do? Would he not rejoice at the invitation he had received, would he not respectfully accept it, array himself in his garments, and hasten, so that no one might be before him at the feast of the rich man? A rich MAN, therefore, gives the invitation, and the poor man hurries to accept it; WE are invited to the feast of God, and excuse ourselves; for he who is too much attached to temporal goods, refuses to come to the feast of the Lord; he who spends his time in useless labor, rejects the food of life; he who indulges in sensual pleasures, refuses to participate in the spiritual feast. The poor, therefore, are chosen, because the rich refuse to come. And why? Because, according to St. Paul, 'the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong.' (1 Cor. 1: 27.) We have, however, to remark, that those who are called to the feast, and come, are represented to us as POOR and WEAK. Poor

and weak are those who, according to their own judgment, are weak, that is HUMBLE. 'But I say unto you,' adds the Lord, "that none of those men that were invited, shall taste of my supper." Behold, He Himself invites you, also His own voice calls you. He invites you through His angels, He invites you through the fathers, He invites you through the prophets, He invites you through the apostles, He invites you through your pastors, through us therefore; He invites you often through miracles, He invites you often through chastisement, He sometimes invites you through prosperity, sometimes through misfortune. No one should refuse to accept His invitation now, for the time may come when they will desire to go, but cannot. Hear then what the divine wisdom speaks through Solomon: 'Then shall they call upon me, and I will not hear; they shall rise in the morning, and shall not find me.'" (Proverbs 1 : 28.)

ON the Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi, the Catholic Church celebrates

THE FEAST OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

THIS feast, instituted for the veneration of the Sacred Heart of our Redeemer, when pierced with a spear, after His death, and which reminds us of the infinite love which our Saviour has shown us, not only by His great sacrifice upon the cross, but also by the unbloody sacrifice of the new law, instituted by Him in commemoration of this bloody sacrifice, is intimately connected with this most sublime mystery, and is, therefore, celebrated immediately after the feast of Corpus Christi. It was, however, instituted at a later period by Pope Clement XIII. (1758—1769) at the instance of the Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. The decree of the Pope speaking of the object of the feast, and its introduction into the calendar of the Catholic Church, says: "By the veneration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is figuratively renewed the spiritual love out of which the Son of God became Man, and by being obedient unto death, testified to men that He was meek and humble of heart."

ON THE DEVOTION OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

I. *Object of this Devotion.*

In the divine heart of our Saviour we must not imagine an inanimate heart, separated from the person of Christ, but the living heart of the God-man, the

center of all his affections, the fountain of all his virtues, the most touching emblem of his infinite love to man. For in like manner the Catholic Church venerates the cross, the blood, and the wounds of the divine Saviour, by feasts which have their proper masses and lessons, in order, by meditation upon these objects, to awaken in us a more fervent devotion to the Redeemer, who, for us, shed his blood on the cross, and for our sakes received those wounds which, as a token of his immense love for us, he was pleased to retain after his resurrection, and to carry with him to heaven, and which, at the final judgment, he will one day show to us. But the sacred heart of our Saviour must be a far worthier object of devotion, since all its thoughts, movements, and affections aim at our salvation, and since it is always ready to receive truly penitent sinners, to pardon them, to restore them again to his favor, and to make them partakers of eternal happiness. Accordingly, the saints, as was mentioned above, always cherished a tender devotion towards this most sacred heart. "Longinus," says St. Augustine, "opened with a spear the side of Jesus Christ: there I enter, and rest in safety." St. Bernard cries: "O, how good, how delightful is it, for one to make his abode in this heart! In this temple, in this sanctuary, before this ark of the covenant, I will adore and praise the name of the Lord in the words of the prophet, 'I have found the heart of Jesus, my king, my brother, my friend.'" "Believe me, O, ye blind men," says St. Bonaventure, "if you knew how, through the sacred wounds, to enter into the heart of Jesus, you would find there not only wonderful delight for your souls, but most sweet rest, also, for your bodies. But if the body finds rest therein, how great, do you think, is the delight which the spirit receives, when united, through these wounds, with the heart of Jesus!" St. Peter Damian expresses himself in a manner not less beautiful: "In this adorable heart we find arms to defend ourselves against enemies, medicines for our healing, powerful assistance against temptations, the sweetest consolations in suffering, and the purest joys in this valley of tears."

But St. Matilda and St. Gertrude were especially moved by the sweetness of this adorable heart, to adore it fervently; and St. Gertrude, enlightened by the Spirit of God, spoke the prophetic words, "The Lord preserved the devotion towards his most sacred heart for the later centuries, as the last effort of his divine love."

We have seen above how these words of St. Gertrude were fulfilled by the blessed Margaret. Would that the fervent desire of Jesus, that all men should know and love his most sacred heart, might be fulfilled!

II. *Excellence of this Devotion.*

It is, writes the venerable Simon Gourdan:

1. *The most holy devotion*, for therein men venerate in Christ those affections and motions of His heart by which He sanctified the Church, glorified His

Heavenly Father, and showed Himself to men as a perfect example of the most sublime holiness.

2. *The oldest devotion* of the Catholic Church, which, instructed by St. Paul, the great Apostle, has at all times acknowledged the great beneficence of the divine and sacred heart of Jesus.

3. *The most approved devotion*, for the Holy Scriptures everywhere admonish us to renew the heart, by changing our lives; to penetrate it with true sorrow, to inflame it with divine love, and to adorn it by the practice of all virtues. When, therefore, a new heart is promised us, by which to direct our lives, that can be no other than the heart of Jesus, which is the pattern of all excellence, and which we must follow, if we would be saved.

4. *The most perfect devotion*, as being the origin of all other devotions. For the heart of Jesus is the inexhaustible treasury, from which the blessed Mother of God, and all other saints have derived their graces, their virtues, their life, their spiritual goods. Filled first with treasures from this source, different servants of God have instituted and established other devotions.

5. *The most profitable devotion*, for thereby we have brought before our eyes the very fountain of life and grace, and can draw directly from it, increasing in ourselves all virtues, by adoring this divine heart, meditating on its holy affections, and endeavoring to imitate them.

6. *The devotion most pleasing to God*, for thus we adore God, as Christ requires, in spirit and in truth, serving him inwardly in our hearts, and endeavoring to please him: finally—

7. *The most necessary devotion*, since the whole object of it is to unite us most intimately with Christ as members of Him, her head, to make us live by and according to his spirit, to have one heart and soul with him, and through grace finally to become one with Him, which is and must be the object of all devotions.

As this devotion is thus so excellent, we cannot sufficiently recommend it to all who are anxious about their salvation. Every one can, indeed, perform this devotion, and adore the Sacred Heart of Jesus, by himself, but there is a greater blessing when pious souls unite in performing it, making for that purpose a confraternity. Of such confraternities there were in the year 1726 more than three hundred, and they are now established throughout all Catholic countries. Hesitate not, Christian soul, to engage in their devotion, and to join in the adoration of that Sacred Heart of Jesus in which all men find propitiation,—the pious confidence, sinners their hope, the afflicted their consolation, the sick their support, the dying their refuge, the elect their joy and delight.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Lamentations, 3.

"He will have mercy according to the multitude of his mercies, for he hath not willingly afflicted nor cast off the children of men; the Lord is good to

them that hope in him, to the soul that seeketh him, alleluia, alleluia. The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever to generation and generation. Glory be to the Father."

The Church on this feast of the Sacred Heart brings before us the consoling words of the prophet on the great mercy and benignity of God towards mankind, by which we also should be reminded of the infinite love of the Lord towards us.

PRAYER.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we who, glorying in the most Sacred Heart of Thy Son, commemorate the chief benefits of his charity towards us, may equally rejoice in their acts and fruits. Through the same Lord.

EPISTLE.—Isaias 12 : 1–6.

"I will give thanks to thee, O Lord, for thou wast angry with me: thy wrath is turned away, and thou hast comforted me. Behold, God is my Saviour. I will deal confidently, and will not fear: because the Lord is my strength, and my praise, and he has become my salvation. You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains: and you shall say in that day: Praise ye the Lord, and call upon his name: make his works known among the people: remember that his name is high. Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath done great things: show this forth in all the earth. Rejoice, and praise, O thou habitation of Sion: for great is he that is in the midst of thee, the Holy One of Israel."

The prophecy of Isaias contains a hymn of thanksgiving to our Saviour by those redeemed through Him: and for this reason the Church repeats it on the festival of to-day, reminding us who were redeemed through the blood of Christ, of His infinite love towards all men. The words: "You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains," are, too, a mysterious intimation of the blood and water which were to flow from the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is an emblem of the spiritual graces with which, as the fruit of the redemption through Christ, the spirit of God fills the heart of man, renewing him, so that he will be enabled to possess a truly spiritual, eternal, and heavenly life.

GOSPEL.—John 19 : 31–35.

"At that time, the Jews (because it was the parasceve), that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day (for that was a great sabbath-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers therefore came: and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him. But after they were come

to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he that saw it hath given testimony: and his testimony is true."

As we have seen on the feast of "The Spear and Nails," the spear which opened the side of our Redeemer penetrated His heart, and not in vain. Out of the great affection and love which he bore to man, Christ permitted His heart even after His death, to be pierced by a spear. He desired first, as already mentioned, to give a new and visible proof of His infinite love towards man; for after He had delivered up His whole body, and every member of His body to the most cruel treatment, to the most painful suffering, and the most ignominious death, and had shed His blood; after His body had been torn by scourges, His hands and feet pierced by the nails, His head wounded by the crown of thorns and bowed down in death, His sacred heart alone remained untouched; it was in a certain sense the only part of His whole body which had been spared from cruelties This heart, however, the noblest part of His sacred body, and with it also the last drop of His precious blood, our Saviour desired to immolate for the love of man, and thus end the great sacrifice which He offered up for us on the cross. For this reason He allowed this noble heart, which in life had been filled with love and good-will towards mankind, in death to be pierced through with a spear, so that in a most wonderful manner were fulfilled the words of the holy Scripture: "He setteth His mind (heart) to finish His work." (Ecclesiasticus 38 : 31.)

The side of the God-man opened with the spear, and the Sacred Heart transpierced, from which gushed forth blood and water, have still another mysterious meaning. The holy fathers perceive in it the figure of the greatest mystery of His love to us, which he has shown by establishing His Church, and by instituting the two great sacraments of HOLY BAPTISM, and of the MOST BLESSED EUCHARIST, on which rest the propagation and preservation of the Church. As Eve, the mother of all the living, came forth from the side of Adam, when asleep, so also from the side of the Saviour, the second Adam, when slumbering in death, came His Spouse, the Church, the true mother of all the living children of God, which is beautifully represented by the blood and water issuing from the side of Christ. The WATER signifies HOLY BAPTISM, and is a sacrament which secures reception into the Church, and from which therefore, as from a fountain, the multitude of Christians come forth and mingle in that spiritual communion, the Church. THE BLOOD, however, signifies the most blessed Eucharist, which as the communion of the body and blood of Christ, is not only the necessary food for the salvation of the faithful, and therefore the preservation and continuance of the Church, but is also the substance of the great sacrifice, daily offered on our altars, and without which no New Testament, and

hence no Church of Christ is possible. St. Augustine very justly remarks: "The Gospel says not: One of the soldiers with a spear PIERCED, or WOUNDED, the side of Christ, but that he OPENED His side, in order to indicate that then in a certain manner was the door of life opened, from which the sacraments of the Church came forth, and without which we cannot obtain eternal life." St. Ambrose also says: "Out of the dead body life proceeded, for WATER and BLOOD issued from it; WATER, which cleanses (in baptism), and BLOOD, which ransoms (in the great atoning sacrifice)."

In commemoration of the water and blood, which came out of the side of the Saviour, when opened, a little water is added to the wine at the offertory in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, which commixture is to represent the two natures united in Christ: HIS DIVINITY AND HUMANITY.

The Church on this festival desires also earnestly to impress upon us, that we should love HIM who exhibited such love towards mankind in life and death, and even after death; that we should give ourselves entirely to Him, who out of love for us delivered Himself up to the most cruel death, and that, as He has offered His Sacred Heart for us, so should we also offer our hearts to Him, together with all our thoughts and affections, our wishes and desires. St. Bernard, in reference to this, very beautifully says: "Since we have come to the most sweet Heart of Jesus, and it is good for us to be there, let us not easily withdraw from Him, of whom it is written: 'They that depart from thee, shall be written in the earth' (that is, be given up to perdition). (Jerem. 17 : 13.) But what do those receive who come to Him? Thou, O Lord, hast thyself taught us; for Thou hast said to those who come near Thee: 'Rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven.' (Luke 10 : 20.) To Thee, therefore, will we come, and rejoice in Thee, remembering Thy heart. O, how good and delightful is it to dwell in Thy heart! I willingly give all I possess, I will change all the thoughts and affections of my heart, transfer my mind into the heart of Christ, and it will nourish me without deceiving me. In this temple, in this sanctuary, in this ark of the covenant I shall adore and praise the name of the Lord, saying with David: 'Thy servant hath found in his heart to pray this prayer to thee.' (2 Kings 7 : 27.) And I have found the heart of the king, of my brother, and my kind friend Jesus. And should I not adore it? Since therefore I have found a heart belonging to Thee and to me, O Jesus, I will adore Thee, my God; only permit my prayer to reach the sanctuary of Thy hearing, draw me entirely into Thy heart! O Jesus, excelling all things in beauty, wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin," (Ps. 50 : 3,) so that cleansed through Thee, I may come to Thee, the most pure, that I may dwell in Thy heart all the days of my life, and that I may forever know and do Thy will; for Thy side has been pierced, that entrance may be opened to us; Thy heart has been wounded, that through the visible wound we may see the invisible one of Thy love. How could the fire of love show

itself better, than by having not only the body, but the heart also pierced with the spear. The wound of the flesh indicates the wound of the spirit. Who should not love this wounded heart? Who should not repay this loving heart with love? Who should not embrace so pure a heart? Let us, as long as we live, love and embrace our wounded Saviour, whose hands, feet, side and heart were pierced, and let us persevere, that He may confine in the bonds of His love our hardened and impenitent heart, and pierce it with the arrow of His love."

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 24.

"LOOK thou upon me and have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am alone and poor. See my abjectness and my labor, and forgive all my sins, O my God. To thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul; in thee, O my God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed. Glory be to the Father."

King David addressed these words to God when, in punishment of his sins, the hand of the Lord lay heavily upon him; when he was persecuted by his wicked son Absalom, expelled from the city, surrounded by enemies, forsaken by nearly all his friends, and forced to wander about a fugitive. The Church, on this Sunday, repeats these words for us in connection with the consoling and earnest admonitions contained in the Epistle and Gospel, that we, being also conscious of our many sins, having been, perhaps, often humbled for them, we, too, following the example of that penitent king, may turn with sorrow and grief, but at the same time with firm confidence to the Lord, who is full of love and mercy, to implore forgiveness of our sins, deliverance from punishment, and renewed peace and friendship with Him.

PRAYER.

O God, the protector of those who hope in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, multiply Thy mercy upon us, that under Thy rule and guidance, we may so pass through the goods of time, as not to forfeit those of eternity. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—1 Peter 5 : 6-11.

"Dearly beloved: Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in the time of visitation. Casting all your care upon him, for

he hath care of you. Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will himself perfect you, and confirm you, and establish you. To him be glory and empire forever and ever. Amen."

The Church, in these words of St. Peter, reminds us that all temptations and adversities, in whatever manner they may come, are sent and permitted by Almighty God, and are, therefore, but visitations and trials, from which no one is free, and to which we should submit in humility; but also in confidence, in order to be freed from our cares, to become partakers of His paternal goodness, thereby to be confirmed in virtue and perfection, and made worthy of receiving the eternal reward. At the same time the Church warns us against the dangerous snares of our adversary, the devil, who, like a lion, endeavors to waylay us, and, if we are not on our guard, destroy our souls. We should, therefore, evade him by being watchful and sober; but if we cannot escape his temptations, we must resist him, strong in faith. St. Augustine, in reference to this, says: "We overcome the invisible and inimical powers, when we overcome the invisible passions and evil inclinations of our nature; if we, therefore, overcome within ourselves the pleasures of the world and the desires after worldly goods, we shall conquer him also, who wishes to govern us through these pleasures and desires, and who endeavors to destroy us by this means."

GOSPEL.—Luke 15 : 1-10.

"At that time, the publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus to hear him. And the Pharisees and the Scribes murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spoke to them this parable, saying: What man is there of you that had an hundred sheep: and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders, rejoicing: and coming home call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost? I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance. Or what woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle and sweep the house, and seek diligently, until she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost. So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance."

With the Epistle of to-day, containing a warning against the snares of the devil, is beautifully connected the consoling doctrine of our Saviour in the Gospel, where He expresses in two parables His great love and mercy towards the penitent sinner, in order not only to incite us the more to a lively confidence in Him, the good Shepherd, but also to encourage us to sincere repentance and amendment. How could our Lord more appropriately show the love and care with which He humbled Himself to go after the sinner, to seek and save him, as well as the meekness and kindness with which He treats him after He finds him, than by representing Himself as the good Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep in the desert (the figure of an erring sinner), and who, with all possible pains and care, when He has found it, carries it home upon His own shoulders, and rejoices more at having found this one lost sheep than at possessing the whole flock?

The words of Christ, however, that "there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance," are not to be understood in a strictly literal sense, as if one sinner when converted was valued more than ninety-nine just together. Our Saviour speaks here after the manner in which men act, who, having lost something, but found it again contrary to their expectation, rejoice more, at least in the first moment, over what they have recovered, than over other goods of greater value, which they securely possessed, and to the possession of which they are accustomed. St. Chrysostom says: "A farmer rejoices more over a piece of land which, after having been unproductive for a long time, finally brings forth fruit, than over another piece of land which never refused to yield a rich crop." Often, however, in truth is there joy in heaven upon one sinner that does penance, more than upon many just who need not penance, because, as St. Gregory justly remarks, the just, conscious of having committed no grievous sins, often fall into a certain false security regarding their salvation, not seldom relax in their efforts to do good, and show very little fervor in the practice of virtue; converted sinners, on the contrary, conscious of their former guilt, are filled with a greater love towards God, and show the greatest zeal in the practice of Christian virtues, and in making amendment for their sins. Mary Magdalen, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Mary of Egypt, and many others are brilliant examples of this truth.

On the first Sunday in July is celebrated

THE FEAST OF THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

This feast, which is particularly devoted to the veneration of the precious blood of the Son of God, which He shed for our redemption upon the cross, and also to the attentive consideration of the blessed fruits and effects of this precious blood of our Saviour, refers, like the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to Corpus Christi. It has been only recently instituted by our present Pope Pius IX. The decree of His Holiness was issued August 10, 1849, at Gaeta, to which he had fled after the revolution had broken out in Rome.

His brief, drawn up by Cardinal Lambruschini, at that time Prefect of the Congregation of Rites, thus explains the object and meaning of the feast: "We have been purchased by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which cleanses us from every injustice, and blessed are they who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. (Apoc. 22 : 14.) If in Egypt the houses, sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, were preserved from the divine wrath, how much more will they be preserved from this wrath, and filled with mercy and grace, who with special devotion and a ready will venerate and esteem the blood of our Redeemer!

"In order that the hearts of the faithful may be more and more incited to love this price of their redemption, especially in these sad times, when 'an enemy has come, and oversowed cockle among the wheat,' endeavoring thereby to deceive many innocent souls, our Holy Father Pius IX. has decreed, that not only in the city of Rome, but throughout the world, all the secular and regular clergy, who are obliged to say the canonical hours, may every year on the first Sunday in July, under the rite of a double feast of the second class, adopt the mass and the office of the most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which has been approved by the Congregation of Rites, and introduced already in several dioceses.

"His Holiness feels confident that the faithful, through the merits of this Precious Blood, will be daily more and more animated in faith, strengthened in hope, and made more fervent in love; that they will lead a life free from all injustice, and thus obtain life everlasting."

Introit of the Mass. Apoc. 5.

Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us to our God a kingdom. The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever. I will shew forth thy truth with my mouth to generation and generation. Glory be to the Father."

These words, which, according to St. John, the saints sing before the throne of the Lamb in honor of their glorified Saviour, praising Him, because He has redeemed them out of every nation upon earth with His precious blood, and made them members of the kingdom of God, the Church, on this festival, proposes to all Christians, to all the members of the Church militant upon earth, that they also may in harmony with the blessed in heaven praise their divine Saviour, who in like manner redeemed them with His most precious blood from the servitude of hell, and raised them up to be children of God, so that, according to the royal prophet, they may without intermission, and with a grateful heart, sing and glorify the mercies of God bestowed upon them.

PRAYER.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast ordained thine only-begotten Son to be the Redeemer of the world, and wast pleased to be reconciled unto us in His blood; grant unto us, we beseech thee, so to venerate with solemn rite the price of our redemption, and to be on earth so defended by its power from the evils of this present life, that we may rejoice in its perpetual fruit in heaven. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

EPISTLE. Hebr. 9 : 11–15.

Brethren, Christ, being come an high-priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation: Neither by the blood of goats, or of calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God? And therefore he is the mediator of the new testament: that by means of his death, for the redemption of those transgressions, which were under the former testament, they that are called, may receive the promise of eternal inheritance, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Treating of the salutary effects of the most precious blood of Christ, which the apostle describes in the words of the epistle of to-day, St. Chrysostom beautifully says:

"Do you wish to know the power of the blood of Christ? Let us return to its first type, and have recourse to the old scriptures. In Egypt God decreed that the punishment of death should come over the Egyptians at midnight, and that their first-born should die, because they kept back His first-born (chosen) people. In order that the chosen people, the Jews, should not be exposed to the same danger as the Egyptians, since they all lived in one place, provision

was made for their safety. Indeed, a wonderful type is given you, that you may know the power of the reality. The judgment of divine wrath was expected, and the destroyer was to pass amid the dwellings. What did Moses then? 'Sacrifice,' said he to the people, 'a lamb of one year, and sprinkle the transom of the doors.' (Exod. 12.) What sayest thou, Moses? Can the blood of a lamb save man, endowed with reason? Yes, not because it is blood, but because it represents the blood of Christ; for like the statues of those who reign in heaven, which although lifeless and dumb, sometimes assist those who take refuge near them, not because they are made of bronze, but because they are the image of the elect in heaven, in the same manner that blood, although lifeless, saved man, not because it was blood, but because it was the type of the blood of our Saviour. At that time the destroying angel passed by the transom and posts, sprinkled with the blood, and durst not to enter. Therefore, if the enemy sees, not the blood of the type, sprinkled on the posts of the door, but the blood of Christ, shining in the mouth of the faithful, as the reality, which is consecrated within the posts of the temple, he will the more quickly depart; for if the angel yielded to the figure, how much more will the enemy not be terrified, if he sees the reality!"

GOSPEL. John 19 : 30–35.

(SEE FRIDAY AFTER THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT. *Vol. I. Page* 344).

St. Augustine gives the following beautiful instruction on the water and blood issuing from the opened side of our Lord:

"The blood which was shed, was shed for the forgiveness of sins. The water prepares the blessed chalice, it cleanses, and is at the same time a drink. It was typified by the command given to Noah, to make a door at the side of the ark, through which the living beings that were not to perish by the deluge, could enter, and by which the Church was typified. For this reason the wife was formed out of the side of Adam, when asleep, and is called the life and the mother of the living. Indeed, the emblem of a great good before the great evil of the fall of man; for this second Adam (Christ) bowing His head, died upon the cross, that a spouse (the Church) might be formed from His side. O, happy death, by which the dead are brought to life again! What is purer than that blood? What more healing than that wound? Man was kept in the bondage of the devil, and served the evil spirits; but he has been redeemed from that bondage; he could sell (himself), but not redeem himself. Then the Redeemer came, and paid the price: He shed His blood, and ransomed the world. You ask, what He has purchased? See what He has given, and you will find, what He has redeemed. The blood of Christ is the price. What did it purchase? What, if not the whole world? What, if not all nations? They are ungrateful and proud, who maintain that either the price was too little, so

that only the inhabitants of Africa could have been bought with it, or that they themselves are so great, that the price was paid for them alone. No one, therefore, should be proud; for whatever the Son of God gave, He has given for all."

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 26.

"The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? My enemies that troubled me have themselves been weakened and have fallen. If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. Glory be to the Father."

In the Introit of last Sunday the Church admonished us to turn, conscious of our sins, and with a repenting heart and childlike confidence to God, to ask Him for forgiveness, grace, and salvation. To-day, she addresses to us, in the Introit of the Mass, the words of the royal prophet, who expresses his joy and gratitude, as well as his unwavering confidence in God for the assistance he really obtained through Him, so that we, who have certainly been not less favored with the love and mercy of God, should, like David, express our joy and gratitude, and our firm confidence in His powerful protection.

PRAYER.

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that the course of the world, by Thy direction, may, in our regard, be peaceful; and that Thy Church may rejoice in tranquil devotion. Through Christ, our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Romans 8 :18–23.

"Brethren: I reckon, that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that made it subject, in hope: because the creature also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth, and is in labor even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the spirit, even we

ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body, in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

The Apostle teaches us in the words of this Epistle the important truth that man, although freed from sin through God's mercy and love, on account of the merits of Jesus Christ, and received again as His child, can in no way remain free from sufferings and adversity, which, as a punishment for sin, befalls all men, since all are subject to sin. The Church calls our attention also to the fact, that the sufferings of this life are not to be compared with the glory that will be revealed to us in the world to come; so that Christians, even in the midst of the most violent tribulations and adversities, should persevere, remembering that the present affliction purifies them the more from their sins, and that thus cleansed and tried, they will the more surely obtain the glory of heaven. St. Augustine says: "Let the world storm and rage, let her revile, let her appear clothed in battle array, let her do whatever she pleases; how little is it compared to what we shall receive hereafter. I compare what I suffer NOW, with that which I hope for hereafter; the former I feel, and the latter I hope for, but the object of my hope is incomparably greater than my sufferings. If what rages against the name of Jesus can be overcome, it can be endured; but if it cannot be overcome, that is to say, if we cannot escape persecution, affliction, or adversity, they will be the means of our receiving our reward the sooner; and he who is faithful, will at the end of the sufferings of this time enter into life eternal." The same holy Father, in another place, says: "O, my soul, if we had to suffer pain daily, if we had to endure the pains of hell for a long time, in order to see Christ in His glory, and to be admitted into the company of the Saints, would it not be worth while to suffer all evils in order to obtain such a great good, and to possess such a glory? Let the devils waylay us, let them prepare their temptations, let the health of the body be destroyed by fasting, let the rough garments bruise the flesh, let hardships come upon us, night-watches weaken us, let the cold penetrate us, the heat scorch us, the head ache, the heart grow faint, the face pale, let us become ill, let our life pass away in affliction, our years in sighs, let our skin be covered with sores, so that we may rest on the day of affliction (on the day of judgment, the day of our death), so that we may ascend to our girded people." And St. Chrysostom says, in reference to the sufferings which we endure for Christ's sake: "They are but shadows and dreams, no matter how painful they may be; what are ten thousand years in comparison with eternity? Are they not but as a drop compared with the boundless ocean? What can be compared with the eternal goods? Who would not, so as to possess them, allow himself to be scourged, put to death, burned, and subjected to a thousand indignities, and endure all possible bitterness? If by being burned our life could be preserved, would we not suffer it to obtain those promised goods?

In order to increase our conception of the glory that will be revealed to the children of God, the Apostle shows that, in consequence of the glory of the just, the whole creation also shall be glorified. As the curse of sin fell not only upon man, but also upon irrational creatures, even nature shall in the same manner, according to the interpretation of the holy Fathers, be brought to greater perfection, and become as it were glorified. In many parts of the holy Scriptures this renovation and glorification of the creation is pointed out. St. Peter says: "We look for new heavens and for a new earth, according to his promise, in which justice dwelleth." (2 Peter 3 : 13.) And in the same sense St. John says: "And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea is no more." (Apoc. 21 : 1.) In the same manner St. Chrysostom expresses himself by saying: "The apostle in the above passage means that not you alone, but also that which is inferior to you, that which has neither mind nor reason, shall partake of the eternal goods; for the creation shall be freed from the servitude of perdition, that is, it shall not be perishable, but shall follow the beauty of your glorified body.....Why are you afflicted at the temptations which befall you by reason of your sins? If the creation, which was made for your sake, has hope, how much more should not you have, on account of whom creation shall partake of those advantages? When the sun is to appear in glory, men array their servants in better garments in his honor. So God Himself clothes the creation with immortality for the glorious freedom of the children of God."

Gospel.—Luke 5 : 1-11.

"At that time, when the multitude pressed upon Jesus to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesareth. And he saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And going into one of the ships that was Simon's, he desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting he taught the multitudes out of the ship. Now when he had ceased to speak, he said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering him said to him: Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing: but at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net broke. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so were also James and John the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not, from henceforth thou

shalt catch men. And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things, they followed him."

The Gospel of to-day instructs us how we can safely obtain, in the midst of the dangers, temptations, afflictions and adversities of this world, our vocation in the kingdom of God; that is, by hearing and following the word of God, and by a faithful imitation of our divine Saviour.

According to this Gospel the disciples, whom Christ had chosen, were not always with Him, but returned sometimes to their former avocation of fishing. Our Saviour used this circumstance to show them by a miraculous draught of fishes how his divine Omnipotence extended to the whole creation, even to the sea, thereby confirming their faith in Him, and giving them the instructive lesson, that without the blessing of God, the efforts and works of man are fruitless. Peter had with his companions worked the whole night, which is the best time for fishing, and had taken nothing; at the word of Christ, however, and with His divine assistance, the disciples, in the broad light of day, met with such wonderful success as proved that the assistance of God, even under less favorable circumstances, ensures a result to our labors that no mere human agency can obtain. Our Saviour showed His disciples and the faithful what they should do in order to secure for their works and undertakings the blessing of God, and hence success. Before He commanded Peter to let down his nets for a draught, He had first taught the multitudes, among them the disciples, the truths of salvation; the disciples, before they commenced their work, had also occupied themselves with heavenly things, and their labor, commenced with a good intention, was, contrary to their expectations, blessed with a rich and wonderful result. In the same manner we should also, according to the direction of Christ and the example of the apostles, in all our labors and undertakings, first of all seeking the eternal salvation of our own soul, be careful to commence our work with prayer, and to offer it up with a good INTENTION. Then we may hope that, although the Lord does not assist us by a miracle, His promise will be fulfilled in us: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6 : 33.)

By the miraculous draught of fishes, which Peter had taken, our Saviour desired to give him in particular, but the other disciples also, an intimation of the great mission to which He had appointed them. He clearly expressed this by the words He spoke to Peter, who acknowledging the divine power of his Master, and conscious of his unworthiness, fell down at the feet of Jesus, who said to him: "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men;" that is, attract men by preaching the gospel, and receive them into the kingdom of God, into the Church. In this sense the holy fathers understand also by the ship, in which Peter was, the Church of Christ, or the kingdom of God upon earth; by the net the preaching of the divine word, and dy the fishes the great

number of Christians, whom the Apostles by their preaching would, out of the immense ocean of this world, receive into the Church. The breaking of the net, and the sinking of the ship, was the foreboding of the calamitous events which in a similar manner should also befall the Church of Christ, and in this sense St. Augustine says: "When the multitude of the Christians became almost countless, such dissensions and schisms arose in the Church, as almost to threaten her fall, if the promise of Christ to assist her in all her dangers, had not saved her." The promise of Christ, to remain with His Church, is confirmed also in this mysterious event, because it is expressly said, that Christ taught the multitude out of the ship of Peter (which signifies the Catholic Church); so also the making choice of Peter as the first apostle; "for," remarks St. Ambrose, "while Christ commanded the disciples in general to let down their nets, He said to Peter alone: 'Launch out into the deep,' whereupon from that moment he was specially appointed commander of the ship, and in a higher sense, head of the Church."

The disciples, astonished at the great miracle performed by Christ, and convinced of His divine Omnipotence, obeyed Him at once; they brought their ships to land, and leaving all things they followed Him. "Although it was an humble calling which they left," St. Gregory remarks, "it was something great for them to give up all that they had. He who renounces all, gives up much, although he may have but little; and for that reason the disciples left much, because they gave up even the desire of possessing anything thereafter." "Let us therefore," continues the great Doctor of the Church, "despise the things of this world, for in leaving them, we gain the eternal goods of heaven; and although we cannot leave all we possess, let us endeavor not to desire the goods of others."

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 26.

"HEAR, O Lord, my voice, with which I have cried to thee; be thou my helper, forsake me not, nor do thou despise me, O God, my Saviour. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? Glory be to the Father."

These words of the royal prophet contain the prayer of a just man, who in all circumstances of life, whether adverse or prosperous, is filled with a firm confidence in God, his protector. The Church reminds us to-day of this prayer of the pious king, because she instructs us in the Epistle and Gospel on the true

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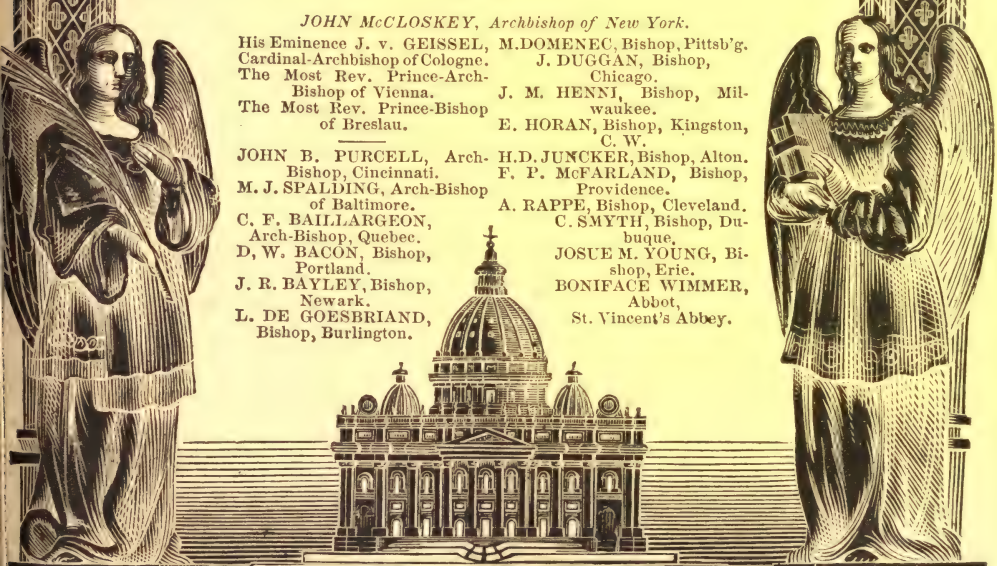
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justice, which the Christian, sanctified by the grace of the Holy Ghost, and made a member of the sacred body of Christ, should practice, rather than the dead works practiced by the Jews of old.

PRAYER.

O God, who hast prepared invisible goods for them that love Thee, infuse into our hearts the affection of Thy love, that loving Thee in all things, and above all, we may obtain Thy promises, which surpass every desire. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE. 1 Peter 3 : 8–15.

"Dearly beloved: Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, being lovers of the brotherhood, merciful, modest, humble: not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing: for unto this are you called, that you may inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him decline from evil, and do good: let him seek after peace, and pursue it: because the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and his ears unto their prayers: but the countenance of the Lord against them that do evil things.' And who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good? But if also you suffer any thing for justice' sake blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their terror, and be not troubled; but sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts."

As already mentioned, the Church incites us in the words of St. Peter, to the practice of true justice, especially of those beautiful virtues, which are becoming in a Christian, of true and sincere charity towards our neighbor, of mercy, forgiveness, modesty, and humility, of perseverance in good works, and of sincere fidelity to our Saviour. Acting, therefore, in the true spirit of our holy religion, we need fear, according to the assurance of the Apostle, neither the snares nor the threats of the wicked: we can, like David, confide in God, for He "whose eyes are upon the just, and whose ears unto their prayers," will assist us in all our wants.

GOSPEL. Matt. 5 : 20–24.

"At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: Amen, I tell you, unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire. If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou

remember that thy brother hath any thing against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift."

The Gospel of to-day is a part of Christ's sermon on the mount, and in it He explains the nature of true justice by defining THE LAW, the commandments of God, according to their spirit and their meaning, and He admonishes His hearers to observe all the commandments according to their true signification, so that they may obtain the true justice of the children of God. "Think not that I am come," our Saviour had once before said, "to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." He wished to intimate that although he would abolish many outward precepts and ceremonies of the old law, which had only a figurative meaning, and were no longer necessary, He would leave untouched the law itself, that is, the commandments of God, but that it should be better observed, and more perfectly fulfilled than hitherto. Our Saviour then warns them against the false justice of the Scribes and Pharisees, of those hypocrites, who strictly observed the letter of the law, who outwardly appeared entirely blameless, and seemingly practiced good and praiseworthy works; but whose hearts were at the same time filled with pride and self-love, with severity and uncharitableness, not caring for the spirit and for the true and perfect observance of the divine commandments, and who thus deprived themselves of all reward before God for their apparent justice.

Our Saviour, however, defines this doctrine with more clearness by pointing out some commandments, and explaining how they should be kept, according to their true and proper meaning. Thus he explains the fifth commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." According to the defective and one-sided explanation of the Jewish Scribes, it was sufficient for the observance of this commandment, not to kill: our Saviour, however, on the contrary, asserts that injuring our neighbor either by personal violence or by abusive and slanderous language, or even by cherishing thoughts of anger and indignation against him, is a direct violation of the fifth commandment, and will be severely punished, and that no good deed, no offering brought by one who lives in enmity with his neighbor, can be pleasing to God. We should not wonder then, that our Saviour declares hatred to our neighbor to be sinful, and slander to be even worse, if we consider that such sins, especially slander, not only include in themselves a great injury to our neighbor, but that they are generally an occasion for the indulgence of even greater sins, of hatred and envy, of discord and enmity, and not unfrequently of murder. St. Augustine speaks in the following manner on the words of our Saviour, contained in the Gospel of to-day: "The justice of the Pharisees consisted in not killing; the justice, however, of those who wish to enter into the kingdom of heaven, is not to become angry without cause. It is, therefore, one of the least of the commandments, not to kill, and he

who breaks it, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5 : 19); he, however, who fulfills it, that is, who does not kill, becomes not at once great, or fit to enter heaven, although he has ascended one step higher, but HE will be perfect, who curbs his temper, although he has just cause to be angry. As soon as he has attained this state of perfection, he will far less commit murder. He therefore who teaches us not to be angry, does not break the commandment not to kill, but rather perfects it, so that we not only preserve our innocence by not outwardly committing murder, but by inwardly restraining our anger. There are, therefore, several degrees of this sin; the first is to cultivate and nourish the feeling of anger in the heart. If the displeasure of the person who is angry is expressed by a sound, thus revealing the existence of the emotion, the sin is greater than if the rising anger had been suppressed in silence; if, however, not only a sound, but words are also spoken by the angry person, which contain a reproach to him who is the cause of anger, then there is no doubt but that the sin is greater than if we show our indignation only by uttering a sound. Let us then consider the threefold punishment,—of judgment, of the council, and hell-fire. When in judgment we have still the opportunity offered us to defend ourselves; in the council, however, although but an ordinary court, the sentence has been pronounced, and the question can no longer be discussed as to whether the guilty shall be condemned or not; the judges only consult as to what punishment shall be awarded him who has already been declared guilty. Hell-fire, however, excludes not only an indefinite sentence, as in judgment, but also the indefinite punishment of the guilty, as in the council: in hell-fire the sentence and the punishment of the condemned are certain."

VIGIL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

(June 23.)

INTROIT OF THE MASS. Luke 1.

"FEAR not, Zachary; thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John, and he shall be great before the Lord, and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb, and many shall rejoice at his birth.

"In thy strength, O Lord, the king shall joy, and in thy salvation he shall rejoice exceedingly." (Ps. 20.)

PRAYER.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that Thy servants may walk on in the way of salvation, and by following the exhortations of blessed John the Precursor, may surely attain the possession of Him whom he foretold, our Lord Jesus Christ.

EPISTLE.—Jeremias 1 : 4–10.

"In those days, the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Before I formed thee in the bowels of thy mother, I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and made thee a prophet unto the nations. And I said: Ah, ah, ah, Lord God: behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child. And the Lord said to me: Say not: I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee: and whatsoever I shall command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid at their presence: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. And the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth: and the Lord said to me: Behold, I have given my words in thy mouth: Lo, I have set thee this day over the nations, and over kingdoms, to root up, and to pull down, and to waste and to destroy, and to build and to plant, saith the Lord Almighty."

The Church very significantly applies these words, in which Jeremias the prophet relates how he was called by God the Lord to the dignity of a prophet, to St. John the Baptist, the greatest of all prophets, who had been miraculously called and chosen by God to this high office, and who before his birth had been sanctified as the forerunner of the Most Pure and Most Holy whom the world had ever seen.

GOSPEL.—Luke 1 : 5–17.

"There was in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zachary, of the course of Abia, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name Elizabeth. And they were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame. And they had no son; for that Elizabeth was barren, and they both were well advanced in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priestly office before God, in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priestly office, it was his lot to offer incense, going into the temple of the Lord. And all the multitude of the people was praying without at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zachary seeing him, was troubled; and fear fell upon him: but the angel said to him: Fear not, Zachary, for thy prayer is heard: and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name John; and thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth: for he

shall be great before the Lord; and shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb: and he shall convert many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias; that he may turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the incredulous to the wisdom of the just, to prepare for the Lord a perfect people."

The Gospel relates thus in a simple but sublime manner the announcement through an angel of the Lord, of the birth of St. John the Baptist, which was also to take place in a miraculous manner, because he was chosen to be the forerunner of the promised Messiah, the Saviour Himself calling him an angel, who was to prepare his way.

The parents of St. John, both of priestly and noble descent, were in every sense worthy of calling the greatest of all prophets, their son; they were also JUST BEFORE GOD, and their character was without reproach. "For," says St. Ambrose, "not every one who is just before MAN, is on that account just before GOD. The judgment of God differs from that of man; man regards the exterior, but God looks into the heart. It may easily happen, that a person appears just before man by means of assumed uprightness; but no one can be just before God, if his justice does not proceed from simplicity of heart. To be just before God is, therefore, the most perfect praise that can be bestowed upon man."

The child whose birth was so miraculously announced to the two pious parents, was for important and significant reasons to be called JOHN; for the name of John signifies in our language PRESENT GRACE or DIVINE MERCY, and the holy precursor of Jesus Christ was certainly a great gift of grace from the Lord to his parents, so very far advanced in years, and also to many others. Therefore, according to the assurance of the angel, he was to be a source of joy and gladness to his father; for he would be great, and cause the salvation of many of the people. "We have reason to rejoice in the birth of Saints," says St. Ambrose, "for they are full of graces, and are so for the purpose of communicating them to others and to become a source of bliss for many." The GREATNESS of St John,—according to the declaration of the celebrated Doctor of the Church whom we have just quoted,—consisted in his renouncing the empty greatness of the world, its pleasures and pomp; in his possessing a heart open to God and virtue, but closed to the world, and a mind which penetrated the deceptions and illusions of the flesh and of Satan, which judged the things of this world not by their appearance, but by their true and intrinsic value, that is by their nothingness. HIS GREATNESS consisted in his being sanctified even from his mother's womb, in his deep humility, his perfect chastity, his severe penances, his glowing zeal, his life of mortification,—in his whole character as a prophet, in being the forerunner of Christ, and in his holy martyrdom. He

was to act in THE SPIRIT AND POWER OF ELIAS; "for," says St. Ambrose, when comparing these two great men with each other, "Elias was also endowed with great virtue and grace in order to lead back the hearts of the people from infidelity to faith, and not less with the virtue of self-denial and patience and the spirit of prophecy. Elias lived in the desert, and so did John. The former was fed by ravens, the latter, although it was in his power to be rich, despised every allurement of sensual pleasure, and, disdaining abundance, chose poverty. The former did not solicit the favor of king Achab, the latter scorned that of Herod. The former, with his mantle, divided the waters of the Jordan, the latter used the Jordan for a wholesome cleansing. The latter walked with the Lord on earth, the former appeared with him at the transfiguration; the latter was the precursor of the first advent of the Lord, the former that of His last. Elias by his prayers caused the rain to fall after a three years' drought, John watered the barren earth of our spirit with the rain of faith."

NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

(June 24.)

IT has already been remarked, that the Church does not generally celebrate the birth-day of the Saints as their feasts, but the day of their death, it being the day of their birth to a life of everlasting happiness and bliss; but for good reasons she sometimes makes exceptions; thus she celebrates—besides the birth-day of the Saviour Himself—the birth-day of His most Blessed Mother Mary, as being free from every stain of sin from the moment of her conception, and that of His holy precursor John, who through a particular grace of God was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb; that is, he was even before his birth freed from original sin and endowed with the grace of sanctification. St. Augustine says on this subject: "The Church generally celebrates the feast of a Saint on the anniversary of his death, which, in fact, is the day of his birth, because he then enters life eternal. The feast of St. John the Baptist, however, is an exception to this general rule, because the precursor of the Saviour was sanctified before his birth, and thus was born in a state of holiness." The feast of St. John the Baptist, the greatest of all prophets, has always been deservedly considered as one of the great feasts of our holy Church, and even in the earliest times of Christianity, no day, with the exception of the great feasts of the Lord, was more solemnly observed than was the feast of the birth

of His great forerunner, and it is yet regarded as a feast of the first class, and is celebrated with an Octave.

The saintly Bishop Maximus beautifully explains the significance of the birth-day of St. John the Baptist. He says: "The feast of to-day, my beloved brethren, is sanctified by the temporal birth of the venerable John the Baptist, who was providentially sent into this world, not only to be a prophet himself, but also that the prophecies of all the prophets might be confirmed through him. And we justly regard with great reverence him, who, as the last of the prophets, by a special grace foretold the coming of the Saviour of the world, in order to be the first to point Him out; for John is the only one among the prophets who was allowed to see with his bodily eyes our Lord Jesus Christ, whose coming was also known to the other prophets; and he it was who announced Him, when He really appeared. He it is whom Isaias, enlightened by divine inspiration, announces in the words: 'THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE DESERT: PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD.' (Isaias 40 : 3.) How justly, beloved brethren, is St. John called a voice, and sent as a proclaimer and witness of the heavenly Father! For it is he, whose birth, name and merit were announced through the angel Gabriel: it is he who through the judgment of the divine Judge is preferred to all mortals, since the Lord says: '*There hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist.*' (Matt. 11 : 11.) How beautifully it is said, that among them that are born of WOMEN none is greater, since He who was born of the VIRGIN is in every sense greater than John! Considering all this, you perceive well, my beloved, what reverence and what devotion we must show him who, in order to be worthy of honor, was predicted by the Holy Ghost, promised by the angel, praised by the Lord, and glorified through the everlasting honor of a holy death. For it was becoming that his mysterious birth should be followed by a holy life, and a happy death close his holy and perfect life. Therefore, my brethren, the Church of Christ justly celebrates to-day, throughout the whole world, with the most joyful solemnity, the birth of him who, as the most faithful witness, announced to the astonished world that joy everlasting had appeared to man."

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Isaias 49 : 1–3.

"The Lord hath called me by my name, from the womb of my mother, and hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hath protected me, and hath made me as a chosen arrow. It is good to give praise to the Lord, and to sing to thy name, O Most High. Glory be to the Father."

The Church on this feast applies these words of the prophet Isaias, quoted from to-day's epistle, to the precursor of the Saviour, already predicted in the old dispensation.

PRAYER.

O God, who, by the birth of John, hast made this day worthy to be honored by us, grant to thy people the grace of spiritual joys, and guide the minds of all the faithful in the way of eternal salvation. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE. Isaias 49 : 1–3 and 5–7.

"Give ear, ye islands, and hearken, ye people from afar. The Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother he hath been mindful of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword: in the shadow of his hand he hath protected me, and hath made me as a chosen arrow: in his quiver he hath hidden me. And he said to me: Thou art my servant Israel, for in thee will I glory. And now saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his servant, that I may bring back Jacob unto him, and Israel will not be gathered together: and I am glorified in the eyes of the Lord, and my God is made my strength. And he said: It is a small thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and convert the dregs of Israel. Behold I have given thee to be the light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation even to the farthest part of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the redeemer of Israel, his holy One, to the soul that is despised, to the nation that is abhorred, to the servant of rulers: Kings shall see, and princes shall rise up and adore for the Lord's sake, because he is faithful, and for the holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee."

The Church very significantly applies also this prophecy, which refers principally to Jesus Christ, the Teacher and Saviour of all nations, to His great forerunner, St. John the Baptist, for he too, even before his birth, was called by God to this high office, and even before his birth his name had been designated by the angel of the Lord. He was endowed by God with the eloquence of an earnest exhorter to penance, an eloquence which pierced the hearts of sinners like a sharp sword. He was thereby to glorify the Lord, to prepare the way for Him, and also to contribute to the salvation of the whole world.

GOSPEL.—Luke 1 : 57–68.

"Elizabeth's full time of being delivered was come, and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had showed his great mercy towards her, and they congratulated with her. And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they called him by his father's name Zachary. And his mother answering, said: Not so, but he shall be called John. And they said to her: There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And demanding a writing-table, he wrote, saying: John is his

name. And they all wondered. And immediately his mouth was opened, and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came upon all their neighbors; and all these things were noised abroad over all the hill-country of Judea: And all they that had heard them laid them up in their heart, saying: What an one, think ye, shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him. And Zachary, his father, was filled with the Holy Ghost: and he prophesied, saying: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: because he hath visited and wrought the redemption of his people."

In the Gospel is related the fulfillment of the promise made through the divine messenger, the Archangel Gabriel, that is, the birth of St. John the Baptist. Zachary had doubted the divine promise, wherefore the angel announced to him, as a punishment for his unbelief, and also to confirm the truth of his words that he would be dumb and unable to speak, until the day when the promise would be fulfilled.

When the promise had been fulfilled, and the child, so miraculously predicted, had been born, the relatives desired to give him the name of his father Zachary; but his mother Elizabeth, although she had certainly no knowledge of the name designed for the child, Zachary being still dumb, replied as if inspired by the Holy Ghost, in miraculous accordance with the words of the angel: "*He shall be called John.*"

The Gospel says that not in vain were none among the kindred of Zachary called by the name of John; for, according to St. Ambrose, it should not be a family-name, as was customary among the Jews, but should be the name of the office, the name of the prophet. And for that reason Zachary, when asked, answered: "John is his name," that is, he has already received that name by divine command. By this answer Zachary also manifested his faith in the words of the angel, and as before he had lost the power of speech through his want of faith, it was then restored to him through faith, and he used it immediately to thank and praise God. The moral application, which St. Ambrose makes of this miraculous incident, is most beautiful; he says: "Therefore let us also have faith, to enable us to speak and to have our tongue loosed, which is fettered by the chains of unbelief. Let us write in our hearts the divine mysteries, if we wish to speak; let us inscribe the name of the precursor of Christ not on tables of stone, but on the living tables of our hearts; for he who speaks of John prophecies of Christ. Let us speak therefore of John, let us speak of Christ, in order that our mouths may also be opened, because we see that the mouth of a great priest was closed, like that of senseless brute, in punishment of his wavering faith."

The song of praise in which Zachary, after the birth of the son, so miraculously promised him, expresses to the Lord his gratitude and devotion, and in which he, filled with the Holy Ghost, prophecies the great calling of his son,

and also of the efficacious teachings of Him for whom his son was to prepare the way, runs thus:

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because he hath visited and wrought the redemption of his people: and hath raised up a horn of salvation to us in the house of David his servant: as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, who are from the beginning: Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us: to shew mercy to our fathers; and to remember his holy covenant. The oath which he swore to Abraham our father, that he would grant to us: that being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we may serve him without fear, in holiness and justice before him all our days. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his way: to give knowledge of salvation to his people, unto the remission of their sins, through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient, from on high, hath visited us: to enlighten them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death: to direct our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1 : 68–79.)

Our holy Church has called this beautiful hymn of praise—the *Benedictus*, after the word with which it begins in Latin, and she had adopted it into the canonical hours, in order that the praise of the Lord, spoken by the inspired father of the precursor of Christ, should be daily proclaimed by the servants of the Lord.

All that we read in the Gospel concerning the history of the early years of St. John, up to the time of his public appearance, are the few but significant words: "And the child grew up and was strengthened in spirit; and was in the deserts until the day of his manifestation to Israel." (Luke 1 : 80.) No doubt but that the massacre of the innocent children in Bethlehem and its neighborhood, by order of the cruel king Herod, induced the parents of John to save their child by sending him into the desert, as the miraculous circumstances which had occurred before and after his birth, the rumor of which had spread through the whole mountainous district of Judea, had probably come also to the hearing of Herod, and were of such a nature, as to make the suspicious king imagine that the child might in fact be the new king of the Jews, for whom he was searching. Yet the withdrawal of St. John to the desert, and his continued abode there up to his thirtieth year (at which time of life the Jewish teachers used to enter upon their public career), was perhaps caused also by higher motives. John was designed to labor among a people deeply corrupted and sunk in vice, to preach to them penance and self-denial; it was therefore necessary for him to spend his youth in quiet solitude, far from the world, unknown to all, so as to remain free from the corruption of the world, and be unfettered by fear of man and earthly considerations from plainly pointing out to men their faults, and from earnestly and impressively admonishing all to penance and conversion by the power of his preaching as well as by the example

of his own mortified life. He was also to bear witness to Christ, and in order to be an impartial witness, and above all contradiction and objection, he was not to spend his youth in intercourse with the Saviour, but entirely separated from Him, not even knowing Him by sight, as it is said by St. Gregory of Nazianzen: "For the reason, that Christ and John were relatives (according to the flesh), and that it should not appear as if John were bearing witness of Christ on account of their relationship, the grace of the Holy Ghost directed, that he should live in solitude during his whole youth, so that it might not appear that the testimony was given out of friendship, or in consequence of any secret agreement, but that this knowledge could have come to him only through God, announcing Him thus: "And I knew him not; but he who sent me to baptize in water, said to me: He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, he it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." (John 1 : 33.) And as St. John spent his whole youth in solitude, he is called also by the fathers of the Church THE FOUNDER OF EREMITICAL LIFE—THE FIRST MONK. St. Chrysostom says in this regard: "As the apostles are the first of the priests, so St. John the Baptist is the first of the monks;"—and with the same meaning that great doctor of the Church writes to the monks: "Consider, ye monks, what dignity you possess; for John is the first of your class; he lived from his birth as a monk in the desert, and there he grew up."

We have several times before spoken of the public labors of St. John; of his martyrdom we will treat on the Feast of the Beheading of St. John, August 29.

VIGIL OF THE FEAST OF SS. PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES.

(June 28.)

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—John 21: 18, 19.

"The Lord said to Peter: when thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands; and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. And this he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God."

"The heavens shew forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of his hands." (Ps. 18 : 2.)

These words, recorded by the holy Evangelist John, were spoken by Jesus, after his resurrection, to Peter, by the sea of Genesareth, on the occasion of the

second miraculous draught of fishes, as related to us in this day's Gospel, and at the time that He gave to Peter the charge of His sheep and lambs, that is of the faithful, and signified that he was to glorify God by dying on the cross.

PRAYER.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we be permitted to be shaken by no fears, whom thou hast firmly fixed on the rock of apostolic confession.

EPISTLE.—Acts 3 : 1—10.

"In those days Peter and John went up into the temple, at the ninth hour of prayer. And a certain man, who was lame from his mother's womb, was carried: whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called the Beautiful, that he might beg alms of them that went into the temple. He, when he had seen Peter and John about to go into the temple, begged to receive an alms. But Peter, with John, fixing his eyes upon him, said: Look upon us. And he looked earnestly upon them, hoping that he should receive something from them. But Peter said: Silver and gold I have none: but what I have, I give thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And having taken him by the right hand, he lifted him up, and forthwith his feet and soles became firm. And he leaping up, stood, and walked; and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And they knew him, that it was he who sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him."

In this Epistle is related the first miracle ever worked by the holy apostles Peter and John, in the name of the Lord, after His Ascension, by which they cured a man, lame from his birth, through the power of this most Holy Name. The miracle was followed by the conversion of five thousand Jews, three thousand having already entered the Church of Christ after the first sermon of the apostle Peter, on the feast of Pentecost.

GOSPEL.—John 21 : 15—19.

"At that time Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, *son* of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith to him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He saith to him again: Simon *son* of John, lovest thou me? He saith to him: Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith to him: Feed my lambs. He saith to him the third time: Simon *son* of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said to him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said to him: Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee. He said to him: Feed my sheep. Amen, amen I say to thee, when thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch

forth thy hands; and another shall gird thee, and lead thee, whither thou wouldst not. And this he said, signifying by what death he should glorify God.

Thus the Saviour confirmed the great preference he had heretofore given to the Apostle Peter (see Gospel of to-morrow), declaring that he should be His first representative upon earth, and the first visible head of His Church. By answering the repeated question of his Master, the first of the Apostles had thrice manifested his love towards Him, and thus atoned for his thrice-repeated denial of the Lord, of which, in a moment of weakness, he had been guilty. Thus St. Augustine says: "For the denial, three times repeated, the threefold confession is made, in order that the tongue shall serve to express love as well as fear." By confiding to him the care of His sheep and lambs, the Lord gave him the power to rule over all the members of His Church, the old and the young, the apostles and disciples not even excepted. "If it was with Peter a sign of fear to deny the Lord," says St. Augustine, "it was to be an office of love for him to guard the flock of the Lord." And the saintly Pope Leo the Great expresses the same thought by saying: "ONE Peter is chosen from the whole world, appointed over all nations, and over all Apostles, and all Fathers of the Church, in order that, although there are many priests and shepherds among the people, Peter may rule all over whom Christ originally ruled." Divine condescension imparted to this man great and miraculous power; and if it is the will of God that other princes of the Church should share that power, they receive it *through Peter alone.*

FEAST OF SS. PETER AND PAUL.

(June 29.)

THE feast of the two holy apostles Peter and Paul rank next to the feasts of the Lord, and is one of the oldest festivals of the Catholic Church; it is one of the highest of the Ecclesiastical Year, and is celebrated with an octave. These two were always deservedly venerated in the Catholic Church, for by reason of the importance of their labors, they may indeed be called the greatest of the apostles. PETER, the Rock upon which the Saviour has built His Church, the first visible head of His Church, the first representative of Jesus Christ on earth,—and PAUL, the great apostle of the world, the indefatigable missionary of the Gentiles, who did most of all for the propagation of the Gospel,—thus they both shine brightly and rise above all their co-laborers like two mighty pillars, on which the great structure of our holy Catholic Church is resting. The feast of these two Apostles is celebrated on the same day, because both suf-

fered martyrdom on the same day,—as the Church says in an Antiphon of that day: "The glorious apostles, who loved each other in life, were also not separated in death."

But if the feast of these two great men is a feast of joy to the whole Catholic world, it is especially of great significance and importance to Rome, the capital of Christendom, the seat of the head of the Church, the city where the two apostles spent the last years of their labors on earth, where they suffered martyrdom, and where their mortal remains rest, as precious treasures, in magnificent temples. This thought is most admirably expressed by the saintly Pope Leo the Great in a sermon on the feast of these two saints. He says: "Indeed, my beloved, the whole world participates in all holy festivities, and the holiness of the one faith causes that which is known to have taken place for the salvation of all, to be celebrated everywhere with a common joy. But this feast, besides the respectful observance it deserves throughout the whole world, must be celebrated in our city with particular solemnity, in order that where the death of these great apostles has been glorified, the greatest joy may also prevail on the day of their martyrdom. For they are the men, O Rome, from whom thou hast received the light of the Gospel of Christ, and through whom, from having been teachers of error, thou hast become a disciple of truth. They are thy fathers and true shepherds, who have done more to make thee fit to enter the kingdom of heaven than they by whose efforts the first foundations of thy walls were laid. Romulus, by whose name thou art called, stained thee with his brother's blood; but they procured thee the glory of becoming a holy race, a chosen people, a priestly and royal city, the capital of the world, as the holy seat of blessed Peter, and of having a more powerful and far-reaching sceptre by divine religion, than by earthly dominion. For, although thou hast increased the territory of the empire by numerous and glorious victories, yet what the fortune of arms, and the bravery of thy legions brought under thy sway is insignificant, compared with what thou hast gained by the peace of Christ. Divine providence ordained that many kingdoms should become subject to one sceptre, in order that the proclamation of the divine word could more rapidly reach all nations, ruled by this one city. Yet this city did not recognize the author of its greatness, but promoted the errors of all nations under its sway, and boasted of its great fear of God, because it rejected no false worship. The more firmly, however, it was fettered by Satan, the more miraculous was its liberation through Christ."

Peter, the prince of the apostles, originally called *Simon*, was a son of the fisherman John, or Jona (as he is called by the Saviour). His native place was the small town of Bethsaida, on the banks of the sea Genesareth, and like his father and brother, Andrew, and most of the other apostles, he was by trade a fisherman. The time of his birth is not known; but he was probably a few years older than the Saviour, and, according to the opinion of St. Chrysos-

tom, the oldest of the apostles. He married and lived in Capharnaum. There, too, dwelt his mother-in-law, who, when sick of a fever, was miraculously cured by our Saviour (Matthew 8 : 14, 15). He first became acquainted with our Lord through his brother Andrew, who also resided in Capharnaum, and who had formerly been a disciple of John the Baptist, but who was also one of the two first disciples of Jesus. At that time, when Peter's brother brought him to the Lord, He called him by the name of Peter (John 1 : 40–42), which change He confirmed anew when He appointed him Head of the Church.

The real calling of Peter and his associates to the Apostolic office took place after the first miraculous draught of fishes, Peter acting according to the word of his Master, after which they "left every thing in order to follow Jesus." (See the Gospel of the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, page 93). His appointment as Head of the Church is related in to-day's Gospel.

The history of the holy apostle Paul will be spoken of to-morrow, on the feast of his commemoration.

INTROIT OF THE HOLY MASS. Acts 12 : 11.

"Now I know indeed that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. (Acts 12 : 11). Lord, thou hast proved me, and known me : thou hast known my sitting down, and my rising up." (Ps. 138 : 1, 2.) Glory be to the Father.

These words of the Introit were spoken by the prince of the apostles, in the fullness of his gratitude to God, who (as related in the Epistle of this day), miraculously delivered him from prison by the agency of an angel.

PRAYER.

O God, who hast consecrated this day by the martyrdom of thy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, grant to thy Church, in all things, to follow their doctrines, through whom the true faith was first proclaimed. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—Acts 12 : 1–11.

"In those days : Herod the king stretched forth his hands to afflict some of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take up Peter also. Now it was in the days of the Azymes. And when he had apprehended him, he cast him into prison, delivering him to four files of soldiers to be kept, intending after the pasch to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison. But prayer was made without ceasing by the church uuto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains : and the keepers before the

door kept the prison. And behold, an Angel of the Lord stood by him: and a light shined in the room: and he striking Peter on the side raised him up, saying: Arise quickly. And the chains fell off from his hands. And the Angel said to him: Gird thyself, and put on thy sandals. And he did so. And he said to him: Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And going out he followed him, and he knew not that it was true which was done by the Angel: but thought he saw a vision. And passing through the first and the second ward, they came to the iron gate that leadeth to the city, which of itself opened to them. And going out, they passed on through one street: and immediately the Angel departed from him. And Peter coming to himself, said: Now I know in very deed that the Lord hath sent his Angel, and nath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."

The apostle Peter, after his miraculous deliverance from prison, related in to-day's Epistle, and after he had also visited the faithful, assembled in prayer for him, left the city of Jerusalem and betook himself to other parts, in order to escape further persecutions. He had no wish, as St. Chrysostom says, to tempt God, nor to expose himself to temptation. His motive was not fear, but his miraculous deliverance had clearly shown that it was the Lord's wish to preserve him still longer for His Church. According to tradition he went first to Cesarea, then to Sidon and other places, preaching everywhere the Gospel of truth.

Herod Agrippa, the wicked prince, who, on account of his persecution of the disciples of Christ, is justly classed with the other tyrants of the same name, soon after met with the punishment he deserved for his atrocious deeds. His end was not less dreadful than was that of the murderer of the Innocents; he expired, eaten up alive by worms.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 16 : 13–19.

"At that time, Jesus came into the quarters of Cesarea Philippi: and he asked his disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the Son of man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist, and others some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."

This part of the Gospel relates one of the most important facts of sacred

history: the solemn confession of the belief in the Divinity of Jesus, made by Simon Peter in the name of the rest of the Apostles; and, as if in reward for this sublime confession, the immediate bestowal of the dignity and distinction of being raised by Jesus Himself to be the Head of His Church, a dignity which the Saviour, according to His words addressed to Peter after the miraculous draught of fishes, had long predestined for him.

Jesus, who desired to execute this important and significant decree, then led His twelve chosen Apostles away from the sea of Genesareth to the city of Cesarea Philippi, situated at the foot of Mount Libanus, near the source of the river Jordan, that is, to the northern frontier of the Jewish territory. He led them thither intentionally, that, as St. Chrysostom says, the disciples might the more frankly and without fear of the Jews, express their mind regarding the important matter concerning which He intended to instruct them.

When Jesus with his disciples had arrived in the neighborhood of Cesarea Philippi, He first prayed, as He had done also before choosing the twelve Apostles, and as He always did before performing any important action, and He asked His disciples, as an introduction to another and more important question: "Whom do men say that the Son of man is?" (Luke 9 : 18); for so Jesus generally called Himself.

The answer of the disciples to this question shows clearly that although the majority of the Jewish people were sometimes inclined, on account of the miracles worked by Jesus, to regard Him as the promised Messiah, they in truth did not possess the faith, or at least were not firmly convinced of it, because they were too much under the influence of their false prejudices against Jesus. Believing in the doctrine of transmigration, a belief which the Pharisees had adopted from the Gentiles, they took him rather to be one of the prophets of the old dispensation, as Herod thought Him to be John the Baptist, whom he had put to death. (Matt. 14 : 2; Mark 6 : 14–16.)

Thereupon, when Jesus put the far more important question to His disciples: "But whom do you say that I am?" then Simon Peter, speaking in the name of the rest of the apostles, but with more faith and zeal for the honor of his Master, made the answer: "*Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.*" This reply of the apostle was indeed a simple, but on that account not less precise and positive confession of his belief in the Divinity of Jesus; a confession of faith, which no subtileness of human intellect can refute, and which confounds the most skillful objections of unbelief in the Divinity of Jesus. The importance of this confession of the apostle Peter is increased still more by Christ's praising his faith, and calling him blessed, because flesh and blood could not have revealed this knowledge to him, but God the Father Himself. And this assurance of the Saviour also clearly shows, that the true and real belief in Him, the Son of God, cannot be obtained by man himself; that it is not a mere result of human sagacity and reflection, and that even the consideration of the

miracles of Jesus alone cannot lead to it, for then Peter and the other disciples could have also obtained it by themselves: but that this belief, as is also shown by many other passages of the Gospel (see John 6 : 44, 66. Romans 9 : 15–18; 11 : 5–9. 1 Corinthians 15 : 10. 2 Corinth. 4 : 3, 4. Ephesians 2 : 8, 9, etc.) is *a gift proceeding from divine grace*, which man can obtain only by divine revelation, through the enlightenment of God's grace.

Hereupon Jesus, rewarding this solemn profession of his belief in Him, as the Son of God, continues speaking to Peter, thus: "*And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.*"

In these words the Saviour gives the important promise of the unshaken and secure continuance of the great institution of salvation, which it was His pleasure to establish here below for the happiness of man; that is, of His Church, so that all the attacks of her enemies, and even the combined power of hell (indicated by the expression, *gates of hell*) should not prevail against her. And they contain also the promise that Peter should be the head of His Church, because He declares him to be the rock upon which it was His pleasure to build His Church, and promises him even the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to enable him to open and shut it in His name, and as His representative, according to the merit of man. In the language of the Holy Scriptures, *the keys* were the sign of possessing the greatest power over palace and empire. Thus the Lord says of Eliacim, who had been chosen chief of the temple: "*I will lay the key of the house of David upon his shoulder: and he shall open, and none shall shut: and he shall shut, and none shall open.*" (Isaias 22 : 22.) In a similar manner it is said of the Saviour Himself: "*These things saith the Holy One and the True One, who hath the key of David: He that openeth, and no man shutteth; shutteth, and no man openeth.*" (Apocalypse 3 : 7.) To *Bind* and *Loose*, according to the Hebrew language, signifies as much as *to forbid* and *to allow*—and we know also that the custom of the Jews of *binding and loosing* the gates of their houses, was the exclusive right or prerogative of the father of the family. Peter, according to the words of Jesus, was therefore to be in the Church what a ruler is in his dominion, and a father in his family; he was to have the power of making in the Church whatever laws, regulations and decrees he should think useful to the welfare of the faithful, and also of abolishing them again, if he should regard it necessary; and the laws and regulations made by Peter were to have the same power as if made by God Himself.

This dignity, promised by Jesus Christ to the apostle Peter, of being the head of His Church, Christ after His resurrection really bestowed upon him (see yesterday's Gospel), and, as the Gospel shows, was continually exercised

by Peter. It was he who, after the ascension of Jesus, rose in the council of the Apostles, and proposed the election of another apostle in place of the traitor Judas; whereupon Matthias was chosen. (See Epistle of the Feast of St. Matthias, page 000.) It was he who, during the first Christian Pentecost, when the disciples had received the Holy Ghost, came forward, and with great energy preached the Gospel of the crucified Saviour, so that on that day about three thousand souls were converted to the Christian faith. (Acts 2.) It was he who with St. John the Apostle, after the ascension of the Lord, wrought the first miracle in the name of Jesus, curing a man born lame. (See Epistle of yesterday.) He, more than the rest of the disciples, was endowed with such power to work miracles, that the sick were delivered from their infirmities when his *shadow overshadowed* them. (Acts 5 : 15.) It was he who baptized the first Gentiles—Cornelius, and the members of his family,—and received them into the Church of Christ. (See Epistles of Easter-Monday and Whit-Monday.) It was he who established his Episcopal See in Rome, the capital of the world, thence to rule the whole Church. (See, Feast of St. Peter's day.) And finally, it was he who presided in the first council, held by the disciples of the Lord in the city of Jerusalem, in consequence of some dissensions that had arisen between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, and in the name of the rest decreed that it was not necessary to circumcise the Gentiles who were to be received into the Church of Christ. (Acts 15.

Like the apostle Peter, all his successors in the Apostolic See have always, according to the unanimous testimony of Christendom, exercised that supreme power, without resistance on the part of the other dignitaries of the Church, or on the part of the faithful; and in all controversies within the Church, the Head of the Church, the Pope of Rome, as the legitimate successor of Peter, the prince of the apostles, has decided, and to his decision all the faithful have submitted without contradiction. Thus, for instance, when towards the end of the first century, a schism arose in the community of Corinth, the Corinthians applied for a decision to Pope Clement in Rome, one of the successors of the apostle Peter, though the apostle John was still living at that time in Ephesus, a city much nearer to Corinth than Rome: a clear proof that the authority of the successor of St. Peter was regarded in the Church as much higher than even the authority of an apostle chosen by the Lord. Thus, also, St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, in Asia, although he was himself a disciple of the apostle John, traveled, when already far advanced in years, to the city of Rome, in order to confer with Pope Anacletus, about the proper celebration of Easter. And thus, also, the orthodox Bishops, persecuted by the Arians (a sect that denied the Divinity of Jesus), applied to the Pope in Rome for the protection of their rights; and even heretics, such as Nestorius and Pelagius, appealed to the Pope to gain his favor for their doctrines, because they knew well that, if successful there, their propagation could be easily accomplished.

Therefore, the most distinguished and celebrated teachers of the Church have always acknowledged the supremacy of the Church founded in Rome by St Peter, and at every opportunity have most decidedly and clearly manifested their reverence and obedience toward the Church and her Head, the Pope of Rome. Thus, for instance, St. Ignatius, the Martyr (107 after Christ), greets the Roman Catholic Church as "The Church blessed in the greatness of the Most High, of the Father and His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, which is loved and enlightened in the will of Him who wills all that is according to the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *that presides* as the Church worthy of God, worthy of honor, blessed, worthy of praise, well-regulated, holy, leading in love, and worthy of the name of Christ and the Father." St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, also manifests his reverence for the Church and her Head, by writing thus to Pope Mark: "To the holy Lord, the reverend Mark, Pope of the holy Roman and Apostolic See, and of the whole Church, Athanasius and the other Bishops of Egypt send greeting. We hope, by the authority of the Church of your holy See, *which is the Mother and head of all Churches*, to obtain, through our delegates, what will prove for the amelioration and comfort of the orthodox." And Jerome, the great teacher of the Church, writes to Pope Damasus: "Since I acknowledge none above you but Jesus Christ, then will I remain in communion with your holiness, that is to say, united with the See of St. Peter. I know that the Church is built on this rock. I shall then not cease to exclaim: I belong to him who remains united with the See of St. Peter."

After the apostle Peter had occupied for twenty-five years the Apostolic See, founded by him in Rome, and labored with rich blessing for the propagation of the Gospel in Rome and many other places, he was at last called upon to end his glorious career in company with his great companion Paul, who at that time was also living in the city of Rome. The most dreadful persecution of the Christians under the cruel emperor Nero had begun, and many of the faithful were suffering martyrdom amid the most horrible tortures. Peter, the first of the apostles, had already rendered himself odious to the blood-thirsty tyrant as head of the Christians, but still more so because he had disgraced and overthrown by his power of working miracles, and by his prayer, Simon, the magician, a heretic and wicked impostor, who was a great favorite of the emperor. He was therefore seized and thrown into the Mamertine prison, with St. Paul, his faithful companion, who, by his zeal in propagating Christianity, had likewise excited the anger of the emperor; but even in their dungeon the two great apostles continued their holy work; by their efforts many other prisoners, and even the two jailors, Processus and Martinianus (who afterwards laid down their lives for the faith) were gained over to Christ.

After the two apostles had been imprisoned for nine months, they were taken from their dungeon, and scourged. Peter was then crucified, and, as he

desired, with his head downward, for it was his wish to die like his Lord and Master on the cross; but, as St. Jerome remarks, he thought himself unworthy of dying in the same position. St. Paul, who was a Roman citizen, was beheaded with the sword.

The two great apostles suffered martyrdom on the twenty-ninth of June in the year sixty-nine. Peter, as visible head, had ruled the Church for thirty-five years, and (though not always residing there), maintained the Apostolic See in Rome for about twenty-five years.

The mortal remains of these two great and holy apostles were at a later day entombed in the splendid churches, called after their names in the city of Rome, where they have always been revered by the faithful of all ages, even by kings and princes, and glorified by God in many miracles wrought near their graves. St. Chrysostom, speaking of the great veneration shown to the relics of these two great saints by the faithful, says most appropriately: "More celebrated than the tombs of Alexander and of the Cesars are those of the apostles. He who is clad in purple comes to them as a pilgrim; he desires to kiss the graves, and to implore the intercession of the saints. Thus the wearer of the crown seeks protection from the fisherman (Peter), and the tent-maker (Paul) even after their death. Indeed, kings, governors, and warriors leave everything, and hasten to the tombs of the apostles; and our rulers in Constantinople regard it as a favor to be buried, not by the side of the apostles, but even on the outside, on their threshold, thus to become, we might say, their royal doorkeepers. How many kings have destroyed cities, built fortresses, and engraved their names in gold, brass, and marble, and have died, and fallen into oblivion! This is not the case with our apostles. Peter, though a fisherman, who never accomplished such deeds, nothwithstanding still surpasses even after his death the sun in brightness, because he aspired to virtue, and conquered the city (of Rome), which is royal above all others. And his mortal remains are a bulwark for the people, and protect them better than all towers and walls."

The apostle St. Peter is the author of two books of the New Testament: two Epistles to the Faithful, especially of the churches in Asia Minor, in which he instructs them in regard to all their duties, exhorts them to a virtuous life, and firmness in Christian faith, and warns them against false teachers and seducers.

COMMEMORATION OF ST. PAUL.

(June 30.)

Although the preceding feast is celebrated in memory of the two great apostles, there are parts of the Mass which treat principally of Peter, the first of the apostles; the feast celebrated to-day, therefore, in close connection with the preceding, is especially devoted to the veneration of his great companion St. Paul, the apostle of the world. This feast is consequently only a continuation of that celebrated yesterday, and it originated in the following manner. It was formerly customary for the Pope to say two masses on the feast of the two great apostles: one in the church of St. Peter, the other in that of St. Paul. This plan being, from the distance between the churches, inconvenient to the Popes, who were generally far advanced in years, the second mass in the course of time was postponed to the next day, so that this day was finally raised to a separate feast.

The early history of the apostle St. Paul has already been related. (See the Feast of his Conversion, January 25.) Immediately after his conversion he preached the Gospel in Damascus, whence, on account of the persecutions of the Jews, he went to Jerusalem, and, suffering there also from the enemies of Christ, he left again for Cesarea and Tarsus. From these places he traveled, accompanied by Barnabas, to the great city of Antioch, in Syria, where both remained for a whole year with the Christian community of that city, and succeeded in bringing a great number over to the Christian faith. It seems also that the apostle here changed his former name of Saul into Paul.

Paul now commenced, in company with Barnabas, his first apostolic journey through many parts of Asia and the neighboring islands. The Jews, still filled with animosity against the religion of Christ, everywhere most obstinately resisted the efforts of the two apostolic men; the Gentiles, on the contrary, received the word of God with much more readiness. Paul and Barnabas then turned their attention principally to the Gentiles, to labor with more success for the propagation of the Gospel, for which reason Paul is called the *Apostle of the Gentiles*, or *the Teacher of nations*. The hatred of the Jews against Paul was so great, that they excited the inhabitants of Lystra against him, where the Gentiles, amazed at the miracles of the two apostles, imagined them to be gods. The Lystrians, however, stoned him, and dragged him out of the city, where they left him lying, supposing him to be dead; but by the efforts of the faithful, Paul recovered his strength, and left the city with Barnabas. After they had preached the Gospel in many other places, they returned to Antioch, whence they were called to Jerusalem, to be present at the first council of the apostles, convoked to decide a question between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, regarding the necessity of circumcision.

Soon after, Paul, accompanied by the disciple Silas, started from Antioch, on his second apostolic journey through Asia and Greece, in order to strengthen the Christian communities, and to establish new ones. They labored everywhere with great success; but almost everywhere suffered persecution from the Jews, who abused and even imprisoned them. While on this journey Paul preached also at Athens, the most celebrated city of all Greece, where he conversed with the heathen philosophers, and converted several of them to Christianity; as also at Corinth, where he remained for eighteen months, and founded a large community of Christians.

Having returned from Corinth to Jerusalem, the apostle soon started on his third apostolic journey through Asia Minor and Ephesus, where he remained for three years, and worked many miracles; *so that even there were brought from his body to the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them.* (Acts 19: 12.) Driven finally from Ephesus by the machinations of a silversmith, who had lived by making for the people small silver models of the celebrated temple of the goddess Diana in that city, but now found his business ruined by the successful labors of the apostle, St. Paul passing through Macedonia, and several islands, returned from Greece to Jerusalem, after delivering at Miletus a touching farewell discourse to the ancients of the community of Ephesus, in which he announced to them that chains and afflictions awaited him in Jerusalem.

On his arrival in Jerusalem, he was gladly received by the brethren; but the Jews began again to persecute him, so that he was seized and maltreated, until the commander of the temple-guard arrived. This officer took him into custody, and put him in irons. Paul was then brought before the high council, to clear himself of the accusations made against him by the Jews; but the trial leading to no result, he was remanded to prison. He was then successively brought before the tribunals of the governors, Felix and Festus; but as he could not obtain justice, he finally appealed to the Roman emperor.

In consequence of his appeal to Cæsar, he was sent to Rome, by sea; and was accompanied by the Evangelist, St. Luke, and another disciple. The ship that carried them was wrecked near the isle of Malta; but all on board were rescued, and safely reached land. Here Paul was miraculously preserved from the bite of a viper that had fastened on his hand, so that he suffered no harm; and many that had diseases on the island came to him and were healed. After a three months' stay there, Paul continued his voyage with his companions, and they finally approached the city of Rome, from which the Christians came to meet him, as far as Appii Forum, some distance from the city.

Paul remained in Rome for two years, and preached the Gospel continually and most successfully to the Jews, and many others that came to him. After he had been once more released, he went upon several other apostolic missions, and, according to tradition, journeyed even as far as Spain. He finally re-

turned to Rome, where he, as has been already mentioned, suffered martyrdom on the same day with St. Peter, during the persecution of the Christians under the cruel emperor Nero. According to tradition, three fountains, that are still to be seen, gushed forth from the spot where the great Apostle was beheaded. Although Paul had been called to his great office last of all the apostles, he labored more effectively than did any of them for the propagation of the Gospel. He established the greater part of the Christian communities, saved the most souls, and received them into the Church; and as by his instructive speech, so also by his writings did he labor indefatigably for the good of the faithful. He is the author of fourteen Epistles, addressed partly to whole communities, partly to individual disciples, and which, next to the four Gospels, are unquestionably the most precious relics of the apostolical era in possession of the Church. They essentially contain almost all that has been taught and presented by Christ, and the rest of his Apostles. They complete, we might say, what has been written by the Evangelists; and they may be justly regarded as the Gospel of the Saviour risen from the dead; for the Apostle taught, as he himself assures us, nothing but what he had learned of the Lord Jesus Christ, who had gone to His eternal glory. St. Jerome says, therefore, very appropriately: "Paul, the chosen vessel, is a sounding trumpet of the Gospel, the lion of Juda, a stream of Christian eloquence, who excites us more by admiration than by words, to the contemplation of the most secret mysteries of the Christian faith, unknown to all preceding centuries, and leads us to the depths of divine wisdom: as often as I read Paul, I think that I hear not words, but thunder." This great servant of God, therefore, could justly also say of himself: "*His grace in me hath not been void; but I have labored more abundantly than all they; yet* (he adds, full of humility) *not I, but the grace of God with me!*" (Corinthians 15 : 10.)

The Introit of the Holy Mass is the same as of *the Feast of the Conversion of the Apostle St. Paul.* (January 25.)

PRAYER.

O God, who didst teach the multitude of the Gentiles by the preaching of blessed Paul the Apostle, grant, we beseech thee, that we may experience his patronage with thee, whose commemoration we now celebrate. Through Christ.

EPISTLE. Gal. 1 : 11–20.

"Brethren, I give you to understand that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor did I learn it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion; how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and laid it waste: and I made progress in the

Jews' religion, above many of my equals in my own nation, being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased him, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; immediately I condescended not to flesh and blood, neither went I to Jerusalem to the apostles who were before me; but I went into Arabia: and again I returned to Damascus: then three years after, I came to Jerusalem to see Peter, and stayed with him fifteen days: but other of the apostles I saw none, except James the brother of the Lord. Now the things which I write to you, behold, before God I lie not."

The apostle here relates in a short sketch to the Christians of Galatia his miraculous conversion from Judaism to Christianity, and also his calling to the apostolate, and directs their attention to the fact, that he had not received the Gospel he had preached to them from other persons, as after his conversion he had had but little intercourse with St. Peter (for whom as head of the Church he always manifested the greatest respect), or with St. James the younger, and that thus no opportunity had been offered him of being instructed by human teachers in the true doctrines of the Gospel. But the Gospel had been revealed to him by Him, who had so miraculously called him from error to truth, that is by the Lord Himself, upon which fact the Apostle lays much stress, not out of a vain desire for glory (from which he was entirely free), but for the sake of convincing the Christians of the genuineness and authenticity of the doctrines preached by him, and of animating them the more powerfully to accept them.

GOSPEL. Matt. 10 : 16–22.

"At that time Jesus said to his disciples: Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and simple as doves. But beware of men. For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues: and you shall be brought before governors, and before kings for my sake, for a testimony to them, and to the Gentiles. But when they shall deliver you up, be not thoughtful how or what to speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak, but the spirit of your Father, that speaketh in you. The brother also shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the son: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and shall put them to death. And you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake: but he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."

Of this Gospel St. Chrysostom says: "Christ by these words intended to say to his disciples: Despair not, when I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves, and command you to be as doves. For though I could order the reverse,

so that you would have neither trouble nor pain, nor let you, as sheep, have cause to fear the wolves, but as lions cause terror to all: yet it is nevertheless better that it shall be as I ordain; for this will bring you more glory, and more certainly manifest my power. Thus also said the Lord afterwards to Paul: *My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity.* (2 Cor. 12: 9.) He Himself then has made the apostles meek as lambs. But let us see also what wisdom the Lord demands. He exhorts them to imitate the wisdom of the serpent, for as a serpent cares nothing, though its body is wounded, if it can only keep its head uninjured; thus also must thou be ready to lose everything, thy faith excepted; thou must not spare thy earthly possessions, thy body, and, if necessary, even thy life, if thou canst only keep thy faith, which is the head and root (of all virtue); if thou hast kept thy faith, then thou wilt obtain again with greater glory all that thou hast lost. Therefore the Lord did not command his apostles to be simple only, and not wise, but he commanded them to be both, thus making virtue perfect. And if thou desirest to be convinced by facts of this truth, then read diligently the Acts of the Apostles, and thou wilt certainly find, that the apostles, when the Jewish people rose against them, and threatened them, never lost the simplicity of doves, but replied with modesty and calmness, and thus conquered the wrath of their enemies, extinguished their kindled rage, and paralyzed their impetuosity. For when they said: Have we not commanded you not to teach in this name (of Jesus?) (Acts 5: 28), then the apostles, though they might have worked numberless miracles, neither said nor did anything bitter or violent, but replied most meekly: Judge yourselves, if it would be right to obey you rather than God. And if thou seest in this answer the simplicity of doves, then recognize also the wisdom of serpents; for they said also: We cannot bury in silence what we have seen and heard."

LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

ST. JUSTIN, MARTYR.

(June 1.)

"Evidences of Christianity."

THE life of an Apostle commenced the Biographies of the month of May, and the life of a Father of the Church, who was, in many respects, an Apostle, begins those of June. Like the Apostles, Justin became a convert to Christianity after he had attained manhood. Embracing the Christian faith entirely convinced of its truth, he manifested his conviction in every action of his life, and made it also his principal duty to defend this faith by word of mouth, and by writing against Jew and Gentile; and for its sake at last he underwent the death of a martyr. St. Justin lived soon after the Apostles, and was their countryman, for he was born in Sichem, a city in the country of the Jews, although not of Jewish but of heathen parents.

Divine grace, which sought in its mysterious way to penetrate also the hearts of the Gentiles, had awakened in Justin a desire for the truth, especially for the knowledge of God. He visited the teachers of philosophy, each one of whom asserted that he possessed the most profound and fundamental truths; but Justin, not at all satisfied, went from one to the other, to find a more certain truth, until he finally thought that the philosophy of Plato would give him a real knowledge of God. It was not, however, the will of God, who was pleased with Justin's honest endeavor to find the truth, that such a noble heart should any longer grope about in the dark labyrinth of heathen philosophy.

Justin was once walking in a solitary place near the sea-shore, and had given himself up to undisturbed meditation, when he perceived an old man of a venerable and benign appearance. Conversing with the old man, and telling him

of his philosophical studies, the former remarked: "Then you admire words, and not deeds and truth; you strive to become eloquent, but not to accomplish great works." Justin tried to justify his philosophy, but the venerable man continued by telling him, that human reason could only discover that there was a God, but that only God was able to communicate to man a sure and profound knowledge of Himself; and the arguments he used in support of his assertion made such an impression on the mind of Justin, that he commenced to despair of ever finding the truth by means of philosophy. The old man told him also, that there had been men to whom God had revealed Himself—the Prophets—and that they were the real and only source where truth was to be found. He should study their writings, and he would find in them truths differing greatly from those taught by the philosophers. The old man went his way and Justin never saw him again.

This was the external cause of Justin's conversion, to which the study of the writings of the prophets led him; but as soon as he had become a Christian, he made it a duty to impart to others the truth in which he himself had found happiness and peace. Without a definite mission, he visited several countries, partly to make himself acquainted with the different Christian communities, and partly to lead the erring, and those who sought after truth, to the knowledge of Christ. The greatest and most laudable zeal of St. Justin for the welfare of the Christian Church, however, consisted in his employing his great learning and talents in defending Christianity against the spoken and written attacks of Jews, Gentiles, and heretics. Many of the excellent works which St. Justin wrote for that purpose, are still in our possession, and as truth is eternal and never grows weak or old, we will quote a few proofs of the divine origin of Christianity, with which Justin refuted the adversaries of the Church.

1. "The Jews have been for centuries and are still in possession of the writings of the prophets; but they, the Jews, are enemies of Christianity; if therefore, their writings bear evidence to the truths of Christianity, we can so much the more rely on it. In the books of the prophets is described, minutely and circumstantially, the person and fate of a Saviour of the world who would come, when the Jews had no longer kings, belonging to the tribe of Juda. The prophets also tell of him, that He should be born of a virgin, in Bethlehem, that He should heal the sick and resuscitate the dead, that He should be misjudged, hated, and crucified; that His body should not perish, but rise again from the dead; that He should ascend into heaven, and then send men into the whole world to proclaim the new doctrine, that He was the Son of God. These prophets lived not at one and the same time, but some earlier, some later, and some were even separated by a term of more than two thousand years; and all that the prophets predicted was fulfilled in Jesus Christ; yet the prophets would not have been able to know all this, if God had not revealed it to them—conse-

quently God Himself testifies in advance through the mouth of the prophets, that Christ, in whom the prophecies were fulfilled, is really the Son of God.

2. "The Christian Church was founded by Jesus Christ, who in the very first years of his teaching was, like a criminal, nailed to the cross, where He yielded up His spirit. This Christians believe, and publicly confess before the Gentiles. It is also generally known that the Jews, the Gentiles and the mighty Roman empire most zealously opposed Christianity, while only people of the lower classes,—women and slaves—persons destitute of protection—embraced it, and yet Christianity spread rapidly, far and wide, and conquered the opposition of the world, without using the least violence. This could not have been the case, if Christ, as He predicted, had not invisibly protected the Church with His divine power.

3. "The Christian religion teaches truths, concerning the divine nature and will, that even the wisest of Gentiles cannot understand, still less communicate clearly to others; but Christianity makes these truths so comprehensible and clear, that persons who are even ignorant of the art of reading, comprehend them, and are in turn able to instruct others. The most profound knowledge of divine truths prevails among the most common persons, and there is in these Christians a wonderful readiness to die for the Christian truth. The professors of heathenism or the pupils of a philosopher, however, have never died for their doctrine. Plato adopted the belief of his teacher Socrates, that of believing in but one God, yet in presence of the Athenians he spoke in favor of polytheism, for fear of losing his life, as Socrates did; while on the contrary we profess and proclaim everywhere the name of Christ, although you behead, crucify, and give us up to wild beasts; imprisonment, fire, and all kinds of tortures, will not deter us from this confession, but will only attract many more to embrace the faith and to fear God. All this is caused without doubt by the divine power.

4. "The Christian doctrine appeared in a world full of crime, lust, and injustice, and succeeded by its quiet and gentle influence in reforming men who were previously corrupt, and in making love of this world yield to the love of God, immorality to virtue, and selfishness to self-denial. While the Jews in their synagogues daily curse and execrate us, and while the Gentiles also do the same, and wreak upon us their hatred by persecuting us and by putting us to death, we, on the contrary, love our enemies, pray for them, and strive to make them also embrace the glorious doctrine, the joyful hope and the everlasting bliss of Christ. And thus it is proved, that the word of Christ is full of divine spirit and full of power and grace. This word is clearer and brighter than the rays of the sun; it penetrates the depths of the soul, stirs up in the sinner a desire to do penance, and brings sweet peace to the converted."

The defence of Christianity written by St. Justin seems to have had a good effect, for the emperor Marcus Antoninus issued a decree, forbidding any one,

who was a Christian, to be punished for his belief. During the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, however, the persecution commenced anew. Although Justin knew that to address the Emperor on the subject would cost him his life, he nevertheless wrote him a letter, proving therein the injustice of persecuting the Christians. His presentiment was but too true; and while up to this time he had defended Christianity by word of mouth and by the power of his pen, God now also granted him the grace of signing, confirming and sealing his faith and writings with his own blood. Justin, who was at that time in Rome, was arrested and brought before Rusticus, the judge. The account of his trial is still preserved, and we give a short extract.

After several preliminary questions, Rusticus demanded an explanation of the Christian doctrine. And Justin said: "We believe that there is but one God, who created all things visible and invisible; and we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who, the prophets foretold, would come as the Judge of mankind, and as the teacher of salvation. As a weak man, however, I am unable to explain the infinite Deity." "Then," said Rusticus, "you are a Christian?" Whereupon Justin answered: "Certainly, I am a Christian." Several other men, who had been brought with Justin before the tribunal, having made the same confession, Rusticus turned again to Justin with the question: "Since you are looked upon as very wise and learned, I wish to ask you if you really believe that you would ascend to heaven if, by my order, you were to be scourged?" And Justin replied: "I hope, after suffering, to obtain the same reward that was given to those who followed the teaching of Christ." "Then you think," continued Rusticus, "that you will enter heaven and be rewarded?" "I do not think it, but I know it, and am perfectly certain of it," was Justin's reply. The judge then said: "Let us proceed:" and turning to the accused he said to them: "Come and worship the gods." But Justin answered: "No reasonable man will turn from godliness to ungodliness." "If you do not obey," threatened the judge, "you shall be cruelly tortured." "What we desire," said Justin, "is to suffer for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and he continued—"this will give us confidence when we appear before the judgment-seat of the Lord and Saviour of the world:" and the rest of the martyrs standing before the tribunal also declared: "What you intend to do, do quickly: we are Christians, and will not sacrifice to idols." Rusticus then pronounced the sentence: "Since you all refuse to sacrifice to the gods, or to obey the order of the Emperor, you shall be carried to the place of execution, scourged, and put to death according to law:" and the unwavering Christians praised God, went to the place of execution, and were beheaded: thus dying martyrs to their faith in Christ. Their bodies were secretly buried by some Christians, who were assisted in their pious task by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be all honor and glory forever. Amen!

ST. BLANDINA.

(June 2.)

"True Bravery."

THE proud frequently boast of their courage and fearlessness in time of danger; yet their valor very often consists only in depriving others of their lives, or in recklessly exposing their own, when they fancy that their honor has been attacked; but when their honor or ambition is not at stake, then these same men are very often timid, and devoid of true courage. We were once, during paschal time, in a city of France, where some hussars feigned sickness, so as to get into the hospital, and there fufill their Easter duties, unseen by their comrades, whose mockery they dreaded. By acting in this manner they proved themselves to be cowards; for they had nothing to be ashamed of, in obeying the commandment of their holy religion. But where the spirit of Christ prevails, it endows with supernatural power persons who are weak by nature, and gives them courage, strength, and endurance, in comparison with which the vaunted bravery of the timid Christian sinks into insignificance.

The life of St. Blandina shows us that a heroic virgin can be found only where Christianity, with all its light and power, has taken possession of the heart. During the reign of Marcus Aurelius, the same tyrant to whom St. Justin had addressed his last defence, a very cruel persecution of the Christians broke out in the cities of Vienne and Lyons. The Christians living in those cities, detailed in a letter to the Christian churches in Asia and Phrygia the whole history of the persecutions, and these Acts are still in our hands. Forty-eight martyrs are mentioned as having sacrificed their lives for their faith, on the second day of June, in the city of Lyons; but we will place before you only what is related in the epistle of St. Blandina.

The most horrible slanders concerning the Christians had been spread among the gentiles. They were accused, for instance, of killing children, eating their flesh, and drinking their blood, as well as of other heinous crimes, such as only a wicked imagination could devise. The Christians were therefore terribly persecuted in order to make them confess; and among those whom the report mentions as having been most cruelly tortured to make them reveal the crimes with which the Christians were charged, was Blandina, a poor servant maid. The Acts say: "In her Christ clearly showed that God honors what man disregards and despises, and that His love makes strong what is naturally weak and frail. We all trembled for her; and her mistress, who is herself numbered among the martyrs, feared that Blandina, in consequence of her delicate constitution, would not be able to bear the first application of the torture, but would immediately yield. Blandina, on the contrary, was endowed with such a power of endurance, that not she but the executioners fainted, so that

others had to be brought in to continue the torture of the pious virgin. Finally, after the entire day had been spent in vain endeavors to make her yield to their demand, they at last declared themselves conquered, greatly amazed that even a spark of life was left in the maiden, since no part of her body had remained unhurt. But that truly happy virgin afterwards told us herself that as often as she exclaimed: "I am a Christian!" so often did her body receive new life. Thus she was strengthened for the struggle, as if freed from pain by that confession; and as soon as she discovered that her holy exclamations diminished her pain, she declared so much the oftener: "I am a Christian, and we do nothing that is wicked."

Some time after this, Blandina was carried to the place where the combats of the wild beasts took place, and there she was tied to a post, to be torn and devoured by lions and tigers. While fastened here as to a cross, with her hands outstretched, her countenance exhibited not the least trace of fear; but in its stead great joy; she implored her Lord to endow her and her fellow-sufferers with firmness and perseverance, and as she manifested both, she could rightly hope, that God would hear her prayer; she showed also, that whosoever participates in the sufferings of Christ, participates also in His glory. Not a single beast dared touch her body, and she was, therefore, led back to the dungeon to be kept there for future combats. Thus she was to crush the head of the serpent by repeated victories, and to encourage the souls of the Christians to perseverance, by remaining herself unconquered in so many attacks, though she was a slight and delicate woman, and by her coming forth from every contest crowned with victory."

At a later period, when these public combats were again renewed in the arena, the judge had Blandina brought thither, and with her a Christian boy about fifteen years old, called Ponticus. To terrify them into a compliance with the emperor's command, both were obliged to witness the horrible torments and final execution of many Christians; then both were told to swear by the gods, but they declared that there were no gods by whom they could swear. As they also expressed themselves in reference to the absurdity of worshiping idols, the crowd, pitying neither the youth of the boy, nor the sex of the virgin, demanded that they should undergo the most cruel tortures that malignity could invent. Strengthened by the exhortation of Blandina, Ponticus patiently bore the torture of the rack, remained firm in the confession of his faith, and yielded up his spirit, unstained, into the hands of his Creator.

Blessed Blandina was the last; like a noble mother she had sent the other martyrs in advance as if they had been her sons, and then hastily and joyfully followed them to the celestial marriage feast. She flinched not while being scourged, rejoiced when she was burned with red-hot irons, and appeared as happy, as if present at a royal festival. She was then once more exposed to

the wild beasts, but they touched her not. A new torture was now devised; she was tied up in a net, and a wild bull was let loose upon her. The animal tossed her in the air with his horns and hurled her about in the arena—yet she remained unhurt. Her countenance preserved its joyful expression, her heart remained firm and full of hope, and she already conversed with Christ. She was finally beheaded, and even the Gentiles wondered, and said: "that there had never yet been a woman who had lived to suffer so much."

Such is the account given in the epistle of the Christians of Lyons concerning the death of St. Blandina.

ST. CLOTILDA.

(June 3.)

"Merit of Woman."

In the fifth century after Christ, two brothers ruled in common over the kingdom of Burgundy. One of the brothers, however, Gundobald, wished to occupy the throne alone, and to accomplish his end, put his brother Chilperic to death. He caused his sister-in-law to be drowned, but spared the lives of the two daughters of the murdered king, because he did not regard them as any obstacle to his ambitious plans. One of the daughters, named Clotilda, afterwards married Clovis, the mighty king of France, who, with his people still adhered to paganism, whereas Clotilda was brought up as a Catholic.

King Clovis loved his young wife with all the tenderness of his heart, and Clotilda, confiding in this love, endeavored to obtain thereby the fulfillment of the most ardent desire of her soul. She asked the king to grant her a request, and the king having promised to do her will, she said: "I pray you to believe in God the Father Almighty, in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost; to do away with the idols that you worship, and to rebuild the churches which you have destroyed." But the king replied: "I shall not give up my gods and worship yours; any other request, however, I will grant." Soon after Clotilda bore him a son, and the king yielded so far to the petitions of his wife, that the child was baptized a Catholic. He received the name of Ingomer, but died soon after his birth. The king was greatly afflicted at this, and bitterly reproached the queen for being the cause of the child's death. He imagined that if he had been consecrated to the gods, he would have lived, but having been baptized in the name of the God of the Christians, he was doomed to an early death. Clotilda replied: "I thank Almighty God, who is the Creator of all things, that He has thought my child worthy of being received into His kingdom. I am not over-

come with affliction, because I know that my little one has found favor with God."

Some time after Clotilda was again delivered of a son, whom she had also baptized and named Chlodomir. This child also fell sick, and the king said: "He will die like his brother, because he has been baptized in the name of your Christ;"—but God heard the prayer of his mother, and the child recovered.

Clotilda continued to implore her husband to worship the true God and to relinquish vain idols. She displayed the holiness of Christianity by the purity of her own Christian life, and made every effort to lead him to Christ. She frequently called his attention to the many cures and miracles which were at that time performed at the grave of St. Martin in Tours, and the heart of the king was thus prepared for the reception of Christ, although another event was designed to effect his complete conversion. Clovis became engaged in a war with the Germans, and necessity then impelled him to a confession, that he had before refused to make of his own accord. In a battle fought between the Germans and the Franks, Clovis was in danger of suffering an overwhelming defeat. In vain had he invoked his idols for help, and when in a moment of the most eminent peril, one of his companions said to him: "O king, believe in the God of heaven, whom the queen worships; He will save thee and us from this great danger and grant thee victory;" the king looked up to heaven and said in tears: "Jesus Christ, whom Clotilda calls the Son of the living God, I implore Thee for assistance in the fear of God. If Thou grantest me victory over these my enemies and I experience the power which Thine adherents ascribe to Thee, then will I believe in Thee and consent to be baptized in Thy name." After making this prayer, the tide of the battle changed, and the enemy, who imagined that they had already gained the victory, were put to flight, their king was killed, and the whole country and people of Germany was conquered by Clovis. The latter thanked God for his great and final success, and on his return he related to Clotilda how he had gained the victory by calling upon the name of Jesus Christ. The battle mentioned here, was fought near Zuelpic, in the year of the Lord, 496.

At that time St. Remigius was Bishop of the city of Rheims, and the queen sent for him, to show the king the way of salvation. Clovis received the Bishop with great reverence, and said: "I will willingly listen to thee, but there is still an obstacle. I think my people will not agree to relinquish their gods; but I will try and see what I can accomplish." When about to speak upon the matter to his subjects, after having assembled them for that purpose, Almighty God had already prepared their hearts, so that they all with one accord called out to the king: "We will do away with our perishable gods and adhere to the immortal God, whom Remigius proclaims." The saintly Bishop greatly rejoiced when he was informed of this, and on Christmas-day the sacrament of baptism was most solemnly administered to Clovis, his two sisters, and to more than three

thousand warriors of his army, who were thus received into the communion of the Catholic Church. An old record, speaking of this most important event, says, that after the baptism of the king it was found that there was no chrism with which to anoint him, and that no messenger was able to force his way through the crowd to procure any, when suddenly a dove appeared, carrying a vial in her bill, containing the necessary chrism.

The king, following the advice of St. Clotilda, then destroyed the temples of the idols, built churches and convents and endowed them richly, showed himself most charitable towards the poor, widows and the orphans, and was henceforth most zealous in all Christian works of mercy. He made the city of Paris the capital of his kingdom, and animated by his pious wife, he there built a Cathedral in honor of the Apostle St. Peter, in which church he was afterwards buried.

Through the conversion of Clovis, Christianity soon spread, not only among the Franks, but also among the German tribes belonging to his kingdom. Pope Anastasius therefore addressed a letter to Clovis, in which he expressed his joy that so many nations had so readily accepted the true faith, after God had given to the Church so powerful a prince as protector. But to whom is the Catholic Church indebted for this increase, and the French nation for this happiness? Next to God, most undoubtedly to the saintly queen Clotilda, the wife of Clovis. Her excellent character, her enlightened mind, her courageous heart, her noble and indefatigable zeal, at last conquered, with the assistance of God, the heart of the heathen king, so that finally he, with his whole people, became Christians. Clotilda was an excellent woman, and exercised a holy and powerful influence over the mind of her husband; but she was indebted to the Church for that power, for the Catholic Church has conferred upon woman the high consideration, importance, respect and dignity, that God had originally designed for her. Among the heathen, woman was looked upon as a servant, the slave of man, and received neither instruction nor education, and on that account was considered neither conscientious nor virtuous, and was consequently kept secluded and guarded. To this day women are so treated in Turkey; they are kept behind lattices, like animals in a cage, and if they appear in public, they must be closely veiled, so that their faces cannot be seen. Polygamy is permitted, and the Koran even expresses a doubt as to whether women have souls. Christianity alone regards and treats women as beings possessing equal merit and dignity with men—indeed the only created being who is elevated above all creatures in sanctity and glory, and who is honored and praised above all the creatures of the world is a woman—the most blessed Virgin Mary. Hence woman especially owes to Christianity, that has elevated and ennobled her, all possible love, gratitude and fidelity.

After the death of Clovis, Clotilda led the life of a holy widow; but, as in her tender youth she had been visited with severe affliction by the cruel murder

of her parents, so also were the days of her old age marked with similar tribulation. Almaric, king of the Goths, had married her daughter. He was an Arian, and such an enemy of the Catholic religion, that he not only abused his wife, especially when she persisted in attending to her devotions, but he shamefully and cruelly maltreated her, in order to force her to become an apostate. When the brothers of the unhappy queen were informed of the sufferings of their sister, they marched with an army against Almaric, their brother-in-law, put him to death, and rescued their sister; but succeeded only in bringing home her corpse, as she died on the road before reaching her afflicted mother. But a still more bitter grief was in reserve for Clotilda. She had devoted herself to the education of the little children of her eldest .son, Chlodomir, who had been killed in battle, loving them and caring for them with a mother's solicitude. Yet two of her sons determined to kill them and take possession of the government and kingdom, which was the inheritance of these children. They succeeded in their wicked plot, and it was the terrible fate of Clotilda to bury her grandchildren, who had been murdered by her own sons. But if she was devoted to Christ during her days of happiness, she grew still more perfect in misfortune. She spent her last years in prayer, watching and fasting, and occupied herself only with works of charity. She appeared always poorly clad, and never ate meat nor touched wine, but built churches and founded convents. St. Clotilda reached an advanced age, but her heart had long before withdrawn from the world—the thought of eternity alone filled her soul. One day she was praying by the grave of St. Martin, at Tours, when she suddenly rose and said: "At last my prayer has been granted; I shall die in thirty days." Soon after she became sick, sent for her sons, exhorted them to serve God, to protect the poor, to rule the people with the kindness of a father, and to live in harmony and peace with each other. She commanded that the little she would leave after her death should be given to the poor. Having thus freed herself from her last worldly cares, Clotilda occupied herself henceforth with God alone, and died in peace in the year of our Lord, 545. The body of the saintly queen was buried in the Cathedral of St. Peter in the city of Paris, by the side of her husband, whom she herself had shown and led to the gate of heaven—to the faith of Christ.

ST. WALTER.

(June 4.)

"Beauty."

THE mortal remains of St. Walter are preserved and venerated in a church not far from the city of Rome. A parchment was found in his coffin, containing the life of the Saint; and many events related in it are, perhaps, merely founded on tradition; but the Christian may discover in this biography some truths that are certain, and which may be of benefit to his soul. We will, therefore, make a few extracts from the ancient manuscript.

"Blessed Walter was descended from a noble family in the city of Rome. His father's name was Euritus, and that of his mother Victoria. They were noble by descent, but still more noble by reason of their piety and faith. Having no children, they frequently implored Almighty God to grant them a child, if it would conduce to their spiritual happiness; but their petitions were unheard. Euritus and his wife nevertheless remembered that God is never deaf to the prayers of his servants, and they therefore besought their friends, and more especially the Pope, who was a man of great sanctity, to pray for them. They promised also that if God would bless them with a child, to give large sums of money to the poor; and God in His merciful goodness hearkened to their fervent prayers. Victoria gave birth to a son, who was wonderfully beautiful, and whose right arm was marked with a star, in the centre of which was a cross. The child was taken to his father, who was astonished, as were all those who were with him, when they saw the lovely infant and the extraordinary mole upon his arm. The friends of the parents rejoiced greatly, and congratulated the father on his happiness in possessing such a son; but he declared that he had received the favor, not on account of his own merit, but in answer to the prayers of the pious, and especially of the Pope. In order to evince his gratitude, accompanied by some venerable men, he carried the child to the Pope, and said: 'Holy Father, behold the son whom God has bestowed upon me. I offer him to you, that you may dispose of him, and of me, according to your pleasure.' When the Pope perceived the remarkable beauty of the child, and his wonderful mole, he raised his hands to heaven, thanked God, and said prophetically, 'This infant will be a true friend of God:' and then taking him in his arms he baptized him. The boy grew up, and advanced daily in the knowledge and practice of virtue, and was beloved by every one who knew him. The father had an exact imitation of the mole embroidered in silk on his child's dress. When Walter reached his seventh year he was sent to school, and there surpassed all the other boys in behavior and diligence. In going to school he was obliged to pass the house and church of a priest named Armand, a very

pious and holy man, who soon learned to know the handsome youth, and is reported to have often said: 'O that Christ may preserve this youth unstained for His service, so that the beauty of his soul may equal that of his body.' One day when the little fellow was passing, the priest called him by name, and Walter, as a well-behaved and obedient child, stopped, and said, modestly, 'Here I am, sir—what is your wish?' And the priest asked—'What is the meaning of the sign embroidered on the sleeve of your dress?' 'It represents, reverend sir, a mark which I have on my body,' replied the child: and uncovering his arm, he showed him the star with the cross. The priest gazed with astonishment upon the wonderful mole, and said, 'O my beloved son, be not ungrateful to the Lord; and I beseech you to acknowledge the grace of Him who has given you, even in this life, a sign of His love, and who in the world to come will reward you with eternal happiness. Endeavor, therefore, to serve Him so as to become a partaker of His glory for ever.' 'Tell me, father, in what God delights,' inquired Walter, 'for I desire to serve Him with all my heart.' 'See, my beloved son,' replied the priest, 'Our Lord is begotten of the Father from eternity, and born in time of his most pure Mother; therefore He delights in purity of body and of soul.' When Walter heard this, he resolved to serve the Lord in perfect chastity, and to keep his soul and body unstained from sin.

"Walter at last reached an age when his beauty was at its height, and Satan, that enemy of the human race, sought to turn him from the road leading to God; and because he could not succeed in tempting him, he inspired the daughter of the highest magistrate with an ardent love for the handsome youth. She admired his manners, his beauty, and his goodness; and her love for him grew every day stronger. She therefore resolved, as she was the daughter of a distinguished man, and a great favorite with her father, to entreat him to give her Walter as a husband. The governor was astonished at her proposition, but he nevertheless sent for Euritus, the father of Walter, and acquainted him with the nature of his daughter's wishes. Euritus, delighted with the proposal, gave his consent; and, after leaving the governor, communicated the matter to his son. But the latter said to him: 'Father, I entreat you, let me choose something better. I would not like to break the vow I have made to Almighty God, to preserve the chastity in which He so much delights.' Euritus at first endeavored to change the mind of his son by means of entreaties, then by threats, and finally even went so far as to strike him: and he did not let a day pass without reproaching him for his want of obedience.

"Walter, therefore, determined to go to the priest who had been the cause of his taking the vow, and to tell him of his sufferings. While listening to the recital, Armand recalled the words of the prophet: "In my trouble I cried to the Lord, and he heard me," (Ps. 119: 1,) and giving his young friend a picture of our Saviour and of the Blessed Virgin, he told him to pray before them, that

the Lord might inspire him with his counsel. The youth returned home, knelt down before the picture, and elevated his whole soul to God, and after he had prayed for some time he seemed to hear a voice from Heaven, saying: 'Walter, fly.'

"The next morning he revisited Armand, and having acquainted him with the result of his prayers, they both resolved to leave the city—which they did secretly. After traveling for many days they entered a valley near Servilianum, and stopping there, they served God most piously, denied themselves all comfort, and became so holy, that God worked miracles through their agency. They did not, however, remain long in the valley, as some wealthy and influential men built them a house near the river Tinna, which house was afterwards largely added to, and became a monastery where many noble persons devoted themselves to the service of the Lord. Owing to the purity and holiness of his life, Walter became their father, their guide, and their teacher, and as the reputation of his sanctity had greatly increased, the Pope appointed him Abbot, thus enlarging the sphere of his usefulness. Many years passed without Walter's parents discovering what had become of their son. God in His wisdom finally led them to the monastery of Tinna, and they wept tears of joy when they found within its sacred walls their long lost and holy son.

"After making a short stay, they endeavored to persuade Walter to return with them to Rome, but he firmly resisted their entreaties. They therefore went back to Rome, sold their property, giving the proceeds to the poor, and returned to their son, where they spent the rest of their days in the fear of the Lord. After the death of his venerable friend, the holy priest Armand, and of his parents, who were buried together in the same church, Walter lived for many years, always advancing in the grace of God. As the husbandman is destined to enjoy the fruit of his toil, so also was Walter, after long and faithful labor in the vineyard of the Lord, called upon to receive the reward of everlasting life. The Lord Jesus Christ, his Master, took him to Himself after an illness of a few days."

Such is the account of the manuscript in which the description of Walter's life was found, but we have a record of a much later period, when only a chapel occupied the place where the monastery had formerly stood. A pious recluse named Joanna—so says the record—lived in a small hut near the chapel, and one night hearing the chapel bell ring, she hastened with a neighbor to the chapel; as they heard singing within, both placed themselves before the door and looked in through a crack; they perceived a youth dressed like a hermit, who, when the door was opened, withdrew behind the altar, and when sought for could be no where found.

The Gospel teaches, that riches are very dangerous to the welfare of the soul, and experience shows that there are but few of the rich who truly love and serve God in the world. Like riches, the possession of great beauty is also

dangerous to the soul; those endowed with it, see that they excite admiration, and that their society is sought for, whereupon they become vain and are thus led to indulge in sin. St. Walter was very handsome; his example, however, teaches us that personal beauty may not only lead to temptation, but also be the cause of great merit to the possessor. It is a flower that blooms, but quickly fades away; a falling rain-drop in which the sunbeam is reflected for a moment in bright and dazzling colors, but like the prayer of Armand at the sight of the lovely child, it may also induce man to make his soul as beautiful as his body, by practicing the virtues of chastity, humility, and modesty. If nature has given you a graceful form and agreeable features, dear reader, consider that you will soon lose them both; that those whom you charm by your beauty, will soon leave you. Remember that you and they must grow old and die: but if your soul becomes beautiful by means of true piety, then will the beauty of your soul last forever and attain perfection in eternity. By acquiring virtue, you please not only God himself, but also the saints of God. There is no better way to increase the beauty of the body than to strive to possess a beautiful soul, for as the soul is, so will the body be on the day of the resurrection. The soul will shine through and give form to the body: it will give it beauty, if it was deformed in life; it will increase its beauty, if it had been formerly beautiful; but it will make it detestable and hideous, if the soul itself is disfigured by sin.

ST. BONIFACE.

(June 5.)

"Brotherhood of St. Boniface."

THE parents of St. Boniface were English Saxons, of noble descent, and his sister is said to have been the wife of a king. As he was an only son, his father was much displeased to see him manifest, even in his earliest youth, indifference to the pleasures and goods of the world, and a decided inclination to serve God in the Church; but the Lord softened the father's heart, and he at last consented to send his son to a monastery to be educated. Winifrid,—for this was the boy's Christian name—progressed so wonderfully in knowledge and in the art of teaching others, that they entrusted him with the management of the school; and many came from other abbeys to enjoy his instruction. His manner of expressing himself was earnest, and at the same time mild, so that his words never failed to produce a good effect. As Winifrid wished to follow the custom of the country at that time, he was not ordained a priest until he had reached his thirtieth year. The piety of his thoughts and actions was

then increased by his close communion with Christ, to whom he daily united himself in the holy sacrifice of the mass.

As in the torrid zone, in the time of spring, the instinct of the lark, the swallow, nightingale, and other birds of passage, teaches them to leave the hot countries, and to fly far beyond the sea, into colder regions, so also in England, and Ireland, after Christianity was established in those countries, and the cold winter of heathenism had disappeared before the burning light of faith, the desire arose in many most excellent men, to wander over the sea to Germany, Friesland and Sweden, in order to propagate Christianity among the heathen nations. But what with those birds is merely instinct or natural impulse, was with these men the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. To this class of men belonged SS. Columbanus, Gall, Kilian, Wilfrid, Egbert, Wigbert, and others,—but especially Winifred, or, as he was called later, St. Boniface. Winifred was highly esteemed in his native country, so that king Ina employed him as ambassador in an affair most important to both Church and State; but the divine spirit urged him to serve God among the uncivilized nations of heathendom. Boniface first essayed to plant the seeds of Christianity in Friesland; but the inhabitants of that country were at war with the Christian Franks, and for that reason little inclined to embrace the religion of their enemies, and therefore Boniface was obliged to return to England without accomplishing anything. He did not, however, on that account lose courage or energy; and, although he was chosen abbot, it was no reason why he should not renew his effort, the soundness, strength and holiness of which was proved by his not yielding to fears and adversities. This time, however, he resolved to seek the consent and blessing of the Head of the Catholic Church, before entering upon his apostolic mission; and he therefore went to Rome. Pope Gregory II. received him most kindly, and furnished him a letter, in which he was empowered and commissioned to preach the gospel to the heathen nations. In Germany we hear of Boniface first in Bavaria; but as Christianity had already taken root there, and he felt himself especially called to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, he set out for Thuringia. The people of Thuringia were not all heathen, because the faith of Christ had already been proclaimed to them; but the country was, in that respect, like a field, the cultivation of which had been commenced, but then abandoned. Side by side of what was left of the Christian truth, grew the rank weeds of Arian heresy and heathen superstition: so that the efforts of St. Boniface were at that time fruitless. The people were averse to Christianity, because they had just expelled their Christian princes, on account of their oppressive rule. Meanwhile King Ratboldus, one of the principal enemies of Christianity, died in Friesland, and Boniface, hoping that the gospel might now be propagated there with better success, went for the second time to that country; and the result equaled his expectations. After he had labored there for three years, he returned again to Thuringia, as he thought the right time had come

also for that country; and he was correct in his opinion. While war and famine were raging, and danger threatening on all sides, Boniface preached the gospel, and God blessed his work, so that many thousands were baptized. He labored with equal success and benediction among the Hessians, whom he next visited. When the Pope heard of the great fruit that attended the pious and indefatigable efforts of Boniface, in consequence of which whole nations were embracing the religion of Christ, he summoned Boniface to Rome, to consult with him on an affair so important for the welfare of Christianity and the world.

On his arrival in Rome, Boniface was received by the Pope with great joy. He examined the faith and the proceedings of the apostle of the heathen, and was so satisfied with both that he appointed and consecrated him Bishop of the Germans. Boniface could not refuse this dignity, because he was thereby enabled to ordain priests in Germany to assist him in his apostolic mission. He was then provided by the Pope with letters of safe-conduct and authority, and he returned again to Hessia and Thuringia, to continue his work of propagating the true faith. In order to convince the pagans of the worthlessness of their idols, he courageously cut down publicly, in the presence of a large crowd of pagans and Christians, the so-called thunder-oak, that the heathen had dedicated to their principal idol. The wood of the oak was used for the building of a church, consecrated to the apostle Peter, which very probably occupied the place where the oak had stood. In other places also he destroyed the idols, and erected churches and monasteries in their stead. Meanwhile, some difficulties had arisen in Thuringia; the Arian heresy had gained a foothold there, and the corrupt clergy of that country opposed, in every possible manner, the truly religious enthusiasm of St. Boniface. He sought to strengthen himself by obtaining assistance from other countries. He wrote letters to pious friends, and entreated them to assist him by their prayers; and succeeded also in persuading some holy priests and nuns to come over from England, and assist him with their co-operation, so that by their zealous activity true Christianity again commenced to flourish in Thuringia. He began also the building of churches and abbeys, that became indeed the spiritual source from whence faith, Christian science and moral culture were spread all over the country. Several places, which were selected by St. Boniface for that purpose, became afterwards important cities; as, for instance, Fulda, Eickstedt, Fritzlar, Amæneburg, and Ohrdruf.

In order to remain in true and constant union with the Church, he made his regular reports to Rome, and frequently asked the advice and direction of the Holy Father. When Pope Gregory II. died, Boniface sent delegates to the newly elected Pope Gregory III., to report concerning the progress of his labors, and to express his attachment and fidelity to the Roman Catholic Church, and Her visible Head upon earth. The Pope received the delegates most graciously, and, as a sign of his confidence, sent to Boniface his appointment as Archbishop,

so that he was now entrusted with the charge of all Germany east of the river Rhine; and he therefore continued to knock, with indefatigable zeal, at the portals of the hearts of his people, to see if they would not open and embrace the true faith. His repeated attempts at that time to convert the Saxons were fruitless: he turned his attention therefore to Bavaria, and succeeded in eradicating the erroneous opinions and improprieties which had grown up there; but he afterwards returned to Hessia and Thuringia, in order to promote in those countries the further progress of Christianity.

St. Boniface, however, felt once more the necessity of refreshing and strengthening his mind for his difficult and important office, and for that purpose went for the third time to Rome, accompanied by a number of his pupils and fellow-laborers, in order that to them also might be imparted, in the capital of Christianity, new courage and animation for their holy duties. While in Rome, Boniface visited with his companions all the holy places, the tombs of the Saints, offering up daily the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and was thus encouraged to imitate the Saints in their lives and sufferings. He visited also the monasteries, where his Christian enthusiasm obtained fresh nourishment by intercourse with pious and learned priests, and the Pope presented him with relics and provided him with letters of recommendation to the priests, princes, and people of Germany, in which they were all called upon to show respect and obedience to St. Boniface as to one sent by the Holy See.

Leaving Rome, Boniface returned first to Bavaria, and with the consent of the Christian Duke Odilo, of Bavaria, divided thewhole country into four Bishoprics: Salzburg, Freisingen, Ratisbone, and Passaw; in like manner also Franconia, Hessia, and Thuringia were divided into bishoprics, according to the directions of the Pope. Boniface was careful to entrust only the most worthy and zealous priests with the management of these bishoprics; but the majority of them were missionaries from England and Ireland. Boniface, however, prepared to establish a seminary, so that Germany might be always provided with pious and learned priests. This was accomplished by the establishment of the abbey of Fulda. Miraculously blessed by God, a monastery arose in the depths of a woody region, and around it were soon seen well cleared and cultivated fields. The monks were industriously and skillfully occupied in all kinds of physical and spiritual labor, and there arose a flourishing school, than which none better was at that time to be found in the world, and many young men from Bavaria, Franconia, and Thuringia, were sent by Boniface to this seminary of learning, art and science, to be instructed and educated.

But in proportion as Christianity spread through Germany, weeds again began to appear in the garden of the Church; heresies and abuses grew up and threatened to stifle the good seed. Boniface, therefore, with the consent of the Pope, held several councils, in order to instruct and reform the clergy and the people. For twenty-five years Boniface had never chosen any particular city

for his place of residence, but now that Mentz, one of the most important sees, had become vacant, the people and the French princes demanded that St. Boniface, as the first Bishop of Germany, should take possession of it; and at last the voice of the Christian people prevailed with him, and although unwillingly, he solicited permission of the Pope to do so. In consideration of the great merits and holy zeal of Boniface, the supreme Pontiff made the city of Mentz the spiritual capital of Germany, so that all other Bishops, those of Cologne, Worms, Spire, Utrecht, Strasburgh, Wurzburg, Augsburg, and Constance, were subject to St. Boniface, as their Archbishop.

Boniface, however, who had labored as an Apostle of the heathen during the greater part of his life, wished also to continue his work to the end. He therefore resigned the more quiet office of Archbishop of Mentz, appointed his successor, and set out, although seventy-three years of age, accompanied by a few of his pupils, to try anew if Friesland could not be gained over to the cause of Christ. They went down the Rhine, and near the Zuyder-Zee he began to preach the Gospel. Many thousands were baptized in a short time, the temples of the idols destroyed, Christian churches built, and the enemies of Christianity gazed in terror upon its victorious march. Some of them, therefore, determined to put to death the Apostle through whose efforts the Gospel was so wonderfully propagated.

Boniface, as he had been frequently obliged to do, lived with his companions in tents, and the newly converted and baptized Christians had been told by him to come on the FIFTH DAY OF JUNE, in order to be confirmed. The appointed day arrived, and while Boniface with his followers were waiting for those who were to be confirmed, a band of bloodthirsty pagans rushed upon them with a wild battle-cry. The fifty-two companions of Boniface wished to repel force with force, but he exhorted them to die in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel, that is, without returning evil for evil, and they were consequently all put to death. St. Boniface fell to the earth, holding the Gospel over his head, and thus died, having in his hands that for which he had labored during his whole life-time.

Eleven hundred and nine years have passed away since St. Boniface died the death of a martyr, and his mortal remains, according to his wish, were brought to Fulda. If you earnestly consider, dear reader, the life of St. Boniface, how this single man accomplished more than any man has ever done for the establishment and propagation of Christianity in Germany, and how he finally, by his glorious death, crowned himself as a martyr, then how little will the good that you have accomplished appear in comparison with what he effected. It is just as though you should measure your own height by that of a mountain. But we believe in the communion of Saints.

While in Rome, and in other cities, Boniface was received into different societies, in order to be benefited by the prayers and good works of their

members. You, dear reader, can become a member of the society of St. Boniface, and gain thereby the benefit of his works and prayers. There still exists in Germany a society, called the Society of St. Boniface, whose aim is to preserve and to continue the work of St. Boniface, and to reclaim what once belonged to it. By the so-called reformation, a large portion of the inhabitants, especially in the regions where St. Boniface accomplished such great things, lost the Catholic faith, and receive none of the sacraments except that of baptism. Among this protestant population there are many thousands of Catholics without churches, without priests, and without schools; and if no assistance is given them, thousands will perish for want of religious support, or else become protestants. A society was therefore formed, to provide such destitute Catholics with churches, schools, priests, and teachers. The members of the society pay monthly, or yearly, whatever money they choose to contribute for the wants of the society, and they say daily the Lord's prayer, and Hail Mary, with the following invocation: "St. Boniface, pray for us!" The present Pope has granted to the members of the society of St. Boniface a plenary indulgence for all time, as often as they worthily approach the Holy Sacraments on the feast of St. Boniface, or else on the Sunday following, on the feast of St. Francis of Assissium, or during the Octave of the Immaculate Conception, and that of Candlemas.

ST. NORBERT.

(June 6.)

'Necessity of a spiritual guide."

THE ruins of the monastery of All Saints, once occupied by the order founded by St. Norbert, are situated on a mountain pass, where noisy cataracts come rushing down. During the reign of Napoleon, when so many monasteries were suppressed for the purpose of seizing their property, this monastery also shared this fate. The monks were compelled to leave, and the building was used for government offices; but on the 6th of June, the day upon which the Church commemorates the festival of St. Norbert, the secularized monastery was struck by lightning, and laid in ruins.

Eight hundred years ago, there lived in the duchy of Cleves, a count by the name of Herbert. When his pious wife, Hedwige, was on the eve of becoming a mother, it was revealed to her that the child to whom she would give birth would one day shine like a brilliant light in the Church. The son whom she brought forth was admirably endowed in body and mind, and his excellent parents resolved to devote him to the service of the Church. Norbert—the name the

child received in baptism—was at first distinguished for his great learning and piety; but afterwards, at the Court of the Elector of Cologne, he became very worldly, although he had already received minor orders, and the preferment of Canon, an office from which great profits were derived. To enjoy life, honor, and authority in the estimation of the world, was now his principal aim; and he found no difficulty in attaining the object for which he labored. Henry V., of Germany, placed such confidence in Norbert, and esteemed him so highly, that he conferred on him a very high office at his court. But as it is with the passions, so it was with Norbert; his success at the imperial court only served to increase his ambition. While in this state of mind, he one day rode out on horseback into the country, accompanied by his servant. A heavy thunder-storm overtook him, and no house being near to give him shelter, he determined to gallop on to a place of safety; when suddenly, with a terrific crash and glare, the lightning struck the ground just in front of his horse. The animal at once threw its rider, and Norbert lay stunned upon the wet ground for upwards of an hour. At first all the efforts of the servant to restore his master to consciousness proved unavailing; but he finally succeeded, and the first words spoken by Norbert were those of Saul, when he, too, converted by the grace of Christ, had lain on the ground: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and he seemed to hear a voice in his heart saying—"Shrink from evil; do good; search for true wisdom, and have recourse to my mercy." The divine grace had seized upon Norbert with a mighty hand. Instead of returning to the imperial court, he withdrew to his own house, where he spent his time in solitude, prayer, and pious meditation. He saw the greatness of the divine mercy that would not permit him to die in his sins; he lamented the time he had given to the world, and thereby lost for eternity; and he punished himself by fasting strictly, and by imposing upon himself severe penances. Norbert knew that it was very dangerous to be his own guide in the matter of reforming his life: he therefore went to a pious Abbot in the monastery of St. Sigisbert, and placed himself under his direction. There he learned to live as a true Christian, and to glory in the humble cross of his Saviour; whereas formerly he had been a man devoted to the world only, and was one whose highest ambition was to obtain honor, riches, and pleasure.

Two years after his conversion, having carefully prepared himself, he was ordained priest on Holy Saturday, in the year 1115, in the Cathedral of Cologne. He had intentionally clad himself in his former splendid court-dress, which he then publicly exchanged for a garment made of sheep-skin, and a girdle made of rope. Worldly-minded persons looked upon this act as something exaggerated and absurd; but pious Christians were edified to see the earnestness of purpose manifested by Norbert, in renouncing the world. The first time he celebrated mass, he felt himself impelled, in the fullness of his heart, to speak of the vanity of worldly riches, honors, and pleasures, and how

the striving after them, their possession and their loss were only a source of torment to man. "How very great, in truth, is the blindness of man," said he, in his sermon, "pursuing honors that disappear, striving for riches that impoverish the soul; slaving for pleasures that end in pain; loving a world that gives them no rest; in which there is no fortune without misfortune; no pleasure without thorns; no abundance without want; and where the happiest days are not without their moments of bitter sorrow."

The spirit of Christ that now filled the soul of Norbert was, however, put to a severe test. The following day he was commanded to preach before the canons; and he did not hesitate to tell them that by their frivolous and worldly manner of life they greatly sinned against the rules of the Church. Unaccustomed to hear themselves admonished, several of the canons were highly exasperated; and one of them not only abused Norbert roughly, but even went so far as to spit in his face. The saintly servant of God did not show the least anger when thus insulted, but wiped his face, and thanked God for the opportunity given him of bearing insults as an atonement for the sins of his past life. He perceived that his labor would be wasted among such men, and he resolved to seek for some other sphere of usefulness. He sold his large estates, and gave the proceeds to the poor; and having thus from a rich man become a beggar, he wandered barefooted and poorly clad into the county of Languedoc, to see Pope Gelasius. The Holy Father gave him his blessing, as well as permission to preach the gospel everywhere, and Norbert then entered upon his apostolic mission. In the cities through which he passed, he preached with such power, both by word and example, that the inhabitants followed and pressed around him in crowds, and many glorious conversions took place. The most bitter enemies were reconciled: people restored what they had obtained unjustly; and many brought rich gifts to the holy preacher, which he, however, sold for the benefit of the poor, living himself a most self-denying life. Bartholomew, the pious Bishop of Laon, appears to have recognized the great value of a man like Norbert, and he sought and obtained the Pope's permission to retain the saint in his diocese. The Bishop having permitted him to labor how and where he would for the kingdom of God, Norbert declared that he desired to live in solitude. With that intention he searched about for some time, endeavoring to discover a proper place; and having in his prayers continually asked for God's assistance and counsel, he came at last to a valley surrounded by rocks and mountains. An old ruined chapel of St. John the Baptist stood in this valley, and Norbert having prayed there the whole night, felt convinced that he had found his future home. It was the will of God that an order, devoted to exercises of penance and to the office of preaching, should originate in a place dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the acknowledged model of penance and prayer. Bartholomew purchased this wilderness, which was called Prémontré, and erected there a monastery, in which Norbert, and a small band of holy men lived; soon,

however, attracted by Norbert's eloquence and his reputation for sanctity, the members belonging to the community increased to forty. The order here founded was called, after the name of the place, Premonstratensians, and sometimes after the name of its founder, the "Norbertines." Its rules prescribed a life of penance, prayer, and fasting. The use of meat was forbidden; and all unnecessary intercourse with the world: and the principal duty imposed upon its members was to gain and save as many souls as possible, by means of preaching. They were thus devoted to God and man; they labored before God for the benefit of man by their prayers, and for the cause of God among men, by their preaching. The spirit which filled the heart of St. Norbert animated also the other inmates of the monastery; and their superior had rather to restrain than impel their zeal. They despised the vanity and luxury of the world; could scarcely be prevailed upon to wear new garments; provided their cells with the simplest furniture; shrank not from the most menial labors, and distinguished themselves by their faithful and never-wavering obedience to their superiors. St. Norbert, however, did not permit them to live as self-denyingly as he did himself: for instance, he would not allow them to go always barefooted; but he did not hesitate to reproach them if they were guilty of any unkindness towards a fellow man, by word, or even by look. The seed planted by him throve miraculously: the order, of which he was the founder, soon counted ten monasteries, containing 800 members, and persons of high rank took the vows, and became humble lay-brothers. But it was the will of God that the light of Norbert should be seen from a more elevated position, and that the sphere of his usefulness should be enlarged. He was appointed Archbishop of Magdeburg, which high dignity his humility would have prevented him from accepting, if not commanded to do so by the delegate of the Pope. Although an Archbishop, he did not change his austere mode of life. He entered the city barefooted, and so poorly clad, that the doorkeeper of the Archepiscopal palace, who thought him a beggar, roughly refused to admit him. But when he was told that the seeming beggar was the new Archbishop, he was so panic-stricken that he sought to escape, till Norbert called him back, and told him, smilingly, "Fear nothing, dear brother; you judged me more truly than those who oblige me to enter the palace; for, in truth, I am not worthy."

With indefatigable fervor and zeal did Norbert endeavor to eradicate the disorders and immoralities that prevailed throughout his diocese. He determined, first of all, to reform the clergy, and for that purpose introduced his order, among whose members he knew that he could find men who would be his faithful co-laborers. He had also to endure and overcome great resistance and persecution from the enemies of Christ, and an attempt was even made to take his life, which design was frustrated by the watchful care of divine Providence. At last the labors and troubles of God's holy servant came to an end. St. Norbert died, after a lengthened illness, in the year 1134.

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An old writer says: "This Saint showed an equal fitness for both active and contemplative life. His energy and zeal were frequently devoted to his fellow-creatures, frequently towards himself, but always towards God. He carried the world into his solitude to sacrifice it there to the Lord, and he carried his solitude into the world, to protect himself from being disturbed and distracted by his multiplied affairs. He managed his public matters as though he had been entrusted with the care of all souls, and he guarded himself, as if he had to care but for the salvation of his own soul."

It was by a flash of lightning, we may say, that God led St. Norbert from the broad road into the narrow path. We are told that Luther, when a young man, was one day standing talking with a friend, when suddenly a flash of lightning struck his friend dead to the ground, and Luther's terror was so great when he saw what had happened, that he resolved to become a monk; but his conversion resulted very differently from that of Norbert. Luther was the principal cause of that great apostacy from the Catholic Church, falsely called the Reformation, and was also one of the causes of the thirty years' war; of the present weakness of Germany, and of many other evils. He also became so depraved, that he married a nun who had escaped from a convent.

Why was it that Luther commenced in the spirit and ended in the flesh, whereas Norbert, from the moment of his conversion, advanced daily more and more in virtue. One of the reasons may be found in what follows. When Saul lay prostrate in body and soul, he said: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and the Lord sent him to Ananias, a good and pious man in Damascus, who was to serve him as a guide. Norbert also, when roused by divine grace to a sense of his own unworthiness, went to the holy Abbot of a monastery and asked for his counsel and guidance; but Luther, even when tempted by the devil, sought for no advice, but directed himself, and thus fell into sin, into great error, and finally became the enemy and persecutor of the Catholic Church, and died as such, after effecting endless harm to millions of souls. Such self-reliance, that scorns advice and direction, is but a species of spiritual pride, and is often the beginning of utter ruin.

BLESSED ANNA GARCIAS.

(June 7.)

"Poor in Spirit."

ANY book is always more clearly and better understood when provided with illustrations, and this holds true of the Bible. The best illustrations of the Bible, however, are the lives of the Saints: they are the personified teachings of the Gospel. For instance, the Gospel teaches: "BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT,"—what does this mean, poor in spirit? The poor in spirit—in the common explanation—are they whose hearts are not attached to temporal goods; but the true meaning of the expression will be better understood, if we introduce to you a Saint, who was really "poor in spirit," Anna Garcias, whose feast we commemorate to-day. The following is an extract of her life, written by herself, at the request of her confessor, for the edification of others.

"I was born in Spain in the year 1549, near the city of Ubalde, where my parents resided, who were richly blessed with worldly goods. I was ten years old when my parents died, and my brothers and sisters then compelled me to watch the sheep, which at first was a very difficult task for me to do. Soon after, however, our Lord began to comfort me, and in His holy company I became so attached to solitude, that it was a real torment for me to go back into the world; and I began to reflect how I might withdraw from the world and lead a solitary life, but God prevented my obtaining my wish.

"When I had grown up, my relatives desired me to marry; but my heart was far from the thought. Once I was summoned to my sister's house, whither my other sisters and brothers had gone with a young man, to whom I was to be betrothed. Being informed of this, I stained my face, put on a torn shawl, and appeared thus in the company assembled at my sister's, who upon seeing me, became so exasperated, that she called me a fool, and turned me out of her house. This treatment delighted me, and my heart felt greatly relieved and comforted. I avoided most carefully the company of young men, and every opportunity where they could speak to me; if an acquaintance or friend of my brother called on him, I immediately left the room, or looked so forbidding, that they dared not approach me. Thus I lived a very retired life, firmly determined never to marry, in order to serve God in perfect fidelity and purity. A priest, to whom I confessed, asked me if I desired to enter the newly founded convent of Avila. At this question I thought in my joy, that the heavens had opened, and I replied, that to accomplish this would be my greatest comfort; but my brothers said, that the nuns there were too austere, and from that time my family treated me very harshly, in order to see, they said, whether my desire was of God

or not. I sometimes had to carry heavy burdens that seemed to require the strength of a man to lift, and even our servants acknowledged, that two of them could not do the work that I performed alone. Undoubtedly divine grace had strengthened me to accomplish this. After I had undergone these severe trials and the displeasure and anger of my nearest relatives, I remained as firm as ever in my desire and determination to become a nun. I was, therefore, at last taken to the convent. But joyful as I had been when I entered, a few days after I lost all consolation, and so remained throughout the whole time of my novitiate; but after having taken the vows, the love of the Crucified entirely filled my soul. Out of mortification I did many things,so as to be looked upon as a fool; but this required no particular effort on my part. I was in fact very clumsy and awkward. From my earliest youth my soul was so penetrated with great devotion and love towards the bitter passion of our Saviour, that in gazing upon His image, reminding me of His passion, I could not restrain my tears, and my only desire was to be poor, despised and ill-treated for the sake of my Saviour. When I was living with my brothers I gave away to the poor every article of dress that I could lay aside without being perceived, and I frequently concealed my food, to give that too privately to the poor.

"For the honor of God I must say, that it always afforded me comfort and pleasure to serve my fellow-men, to assist them in their need and to benefit them wherever and whenever I could; and although it might put me to inconvenience, I did not mind it, and never felt the trouble, but only joy and comfort. For such a favor I am greatly indebted up to the present day, to Almighty God, whose most holy name be praised and blessed forever.

"The Prioress of our convent was once confined to her bed, and in her great affection to me she desired me to attend her. I soon, however, observed that she preferred the other sisters to me, and that their society was more agreeable to her than mine. I took no notice of it, however, and nursed her with as much love as I would have served our Lord Himself, and although she remained less friendly to me, the love that reigned in my heart, caused me joy at this self-denial. Once I had prepared with particular care a very tempting dish, and entreated her most earnestly to taste it; but she refused and sent me away, and in obeying her, I greatly rejoiced to have met with such contempt.

"Once God had revealed to me, that at a later period I would have to go to France by sea; and because I was somewhat alarmed, our Lord came, so that I distinctly felt His presence, although I could not see him, and He said to me: "Must not the grapes yield their juice by means of the wine-press? All my friends have gone that way, and thou must do the same." These words awakened in me a new courage and a readiness to do all that God might demand of me, and I delivered my heart into His hands. It was afterwards resolved, that four of us, including myself, should go to France, to establish convents of our order there. On the frontier between Spain and France, night overtook us on

a high mountain, and darkness prevented us from continuing our journey. We were obliged to pass the night in the open air, while a violent storm was raging, and we were without bread and wine to refresh us; yet the peace of my heart remained undisturbed; only once I was saddened by the thought of becoming in my unfitness a burden to the other sisters, but the Lord comforted me by the assurance of His assistance, and my heart felt so much at ease, that I rejoiced at being despised for the sake of our Lord.

"On our arrival in Paris we found a house, only too well furnished for poor barefooted Carmelite nuns. With great joy I took charge of the kitchen, for I was lay-sister, a position pleasing to me, because I always liked to serve others. Our superior, however, insisted upon my receiving the black veil, that is, to become a choir-sister, and duty obliged me to obey, although very unwillingly, because I would have preferred to remain in an humble position. Soon after I was sent to Pontoise, to establish a convent there. Our solemn and very kind reception there, saddened and troubled me very much; I was really ashamed of the office of Prioress, and at no other time did I ever feel a greater contempt for myself than on that occasion. I looked upon myself as a contemptible little worm, as in fact I am, but I never before felt so clearly my unworthiness, as on this occasion.

"At another time I saw my soul in the condition of a small silk-worm, diligently nourished and carefully preserved. When it attains its growth it begins to spin a thin silken thread and to make itself a little nest, by which employment it gradually loses its strength, and then it shuts itself entirely up in its shell, and looks as though it were dead. Something similar to this did I experience in my soul. In acknowledgment of its emptiness, it shut itself up with the sweet love that always fills my heart, which no longer desired to live for its own sake; for to die is the true life of the soul. I wished that I could lose a thousand lives—I would have sacrificed them with joy, if Almighty God would but have been extolled and glorified, and there is nothing on earth that can satisfy me, but to give and lose my life for my Beloved.

"I once complained to the Lord of being raised to office, for I looked upon myself as a mere straw. And I received the answer: 'I kindle the fire with straw.'"

"Some time after I was re-called to Paris, having been appointed Prioress of the convent there. This caused me much grief, but recognizing it also as the will of God, I sacrificed myself in spirit and said: 'Do with me, O Lord, as Thou thinkest best; but it causes me much grief and shame to be thus honored; why dost Thou visit me with such affliction?' And the Lord said with much distinctness: 'This is the path for those to tread, who perform the works of God, as it also was my path: sad when honored, and joyful when in disgrace and suffering.'

In the exhortation, that B. Anna Garcias in her capacity as Prioress left

for the sisters of the order, she says: "There is no more certain sign of being poor in spirit, than in being truly obedient; for obedience is the true touchstone of all other virtues. Those who possess the virtue of poverty, rejoice and delight in obtaining the poorest for themselves in all things, in dress and in food, whatever is regarded as worthless, and been rejected by others. And they do this not out of self-denial, but because everything superfluous burdens and annoys them. The truly poor, love not themselves, nor do they love honor, favor, authority, power, or respect in the eyes of man; their greatest desire is to deny themselves in all things and to have no relish for bodily comfort, in order to become thus always more like their poor Saviour and to follow closely in His footsteps. Although this virtue should offer no other good, but the freedom and peace which the truly poor enjoy, yet all should zealously strive to obtain it. I remember, that we frequently suffered great want, being sometimes even without food, and yet there was in this poverty, such a spiritual abundance, that in the fullness of the comfort and joy that filled their hearts, the sisters felt not the want of earthly things."

In one of the hymns to the Holy Cross, composed by Anna, there is a verse, in which she says: "Poverty and a retired life, silence and seclusion, exercised in Thee, O Holy Cross, cause my heart's great love to Thee."

This, and still more was written by B. Anna at the request of her confessor. We are told, that during the last two years of her life she suffered much from disease, so that she had not the least relish for anything on earth, but lived as if in exile, sighing day and night for her native country. It caused her pain to speak of worldly matters, because her heart had entirely withdrawn itself from the world. When the Archduchess of Brabant, in her great love for Anna, sent physicians and ladies to minister to her wants, the dying Saint was much grieved that they cared so much for her person, and she implored God to take her from this world unheeded and quietly. She was always greatly displeased if persons thought well of her or treated her respectfully; during her illness she was afraid of causing trouble and inconvenience to any one; she never asked for anything she relished, but accepted whatever her attendant gave her. In her longing for her heavenly home she always said with great patience: "See Lord, here I am, accomplish in me Thy most holy will; I wish and desire nothing else." After suffering very much, B. Anna Garcias died at the age of seventy-seven. "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"

ST. MEDARD.

(June 8.)

"Theft."

St. Medard was born of noble parents, and even in his childhood gave sure indications of his future spiritual greatness. Thus when still a boy, animated by a pure Christian spirit, he gave his own cloak to a blind person who was wretchedly clad, declaring that the appearance of the beggar, who was also a member of Christ's body, had deeply affected him. Again we are told that while tending the flocks of his parents, a custom very general in the sixth century, even among children of noble parents, he would often fast for the purpose of giving his dinner to the poor. When Medard had attained a proper age, his parents sent him to the Bishop of Vermand to have him trained for the service of the Church, and the Bishop received and treated the youth with the love and affection of a father. An ancient life of the Saint says that it was impossible to describe the godly, chaste and respectful behavior of Medard while under the care of the Bishop. "He was courageous in misfortune, humble in prosperity, desirous of being useful to all, and truly charitable towards the poor. With manly resolution he crushed every inclination to vice, followed the narrow path of virtue, avoided what would displease God, and zealously accomplished whatever would please Him. He was indefatigable in prayer, persevering in fasting and watching, and full of compassion for his fellow-beings. He regarded himself as a stranger in the world, and his spirit dwelt in heaven. His countenance was beautiful, his speech fluent, and the praise of God was always on his lips; thus he ascended from virtue to virtue, to be honored hereafter and to see the Lord of lords."

After a careful preparation, Medard was ordained, and became a model to other priests. He preached so impressively, that even the most unfeeling hearts were touched, for to his words was united the great influence of his example. His pastoral duties, prayer and meditation, were his only occupations; he lived so abstemiously that he might be said to keep a continual fast, and his will and desires were perfectly mortified, whence proceeded his wonderful equanimity in joy or sorrow.

At a later period, Medard was appointed Bishop, and consecrated by St. Remigius. As a general rule, worldly passions and zeal begin to decline with advancing years, for the reason that the strength of the flesh from which they take their rise commences to fail, but Christian desires and zeal proceed from the spirit and from God, and therefore they but increase with age, and may be said to continue growing until they attain perfection in the next world. This was verified in the person of Medard; his zeal for the cause of Christ and

for the welfare of his flock, increased more and more, and the abuse and persecution which he suffered from the world, was borne by him with joy, meekness, patience, and silence.

The episcopal city of Vermand was destroyed by the ravages of war, in consequence of which St. Medard was obliged to make the city of Noyon his place of residence. When the saintly Bishop Eleutherius of the neighboring diocese of Tournai died, the people and the clergy expressed a wish to have Medard for their Bishop; and the Pope, at the request of king Clotaire, directed both dioceses to be united under one Bishop, and they remained thus united for five hundred years. As a part of the inhabitants of the former diocese of Tournai were still pagans, Medard had the opportunity of distinguishing himself in the cause of God as a missionary, and he shrank from no effort or danger in order to lead the pagans from the night of superstition and vice, to the light of Christianity; and as God assisted the inspired words of his servant with miracles, Christian truth at last conquered the falsehood of heathenism, just as the sun at mid-day breaks through the thick fog that had previously obscured a beautiful landscape. Many of the inhabitants of Flanders especially, became, in consequence of his missionary labors, very pious and virtuous Christians.

When king Clotaire was told that St. Medard was dying, he went immediately to the city of Noyon to receive the blessing of the holy Bishop; and when, to the infinite grief of the whole kingdom, Medard yielded up his spirit, he was buried in the Cathedral of Noyon. The many miracles that occurred by the grave of St. Medard induced Clotaire, who had shown him the greatest honor and regard during his life-time, to have his body taken to the royal residence. The body was then enclosed in a precious coffin, ornamented with gold and jewels, and the king, accompanied by his children and court, not only was present at the funeral, but acted as one of the bearers.

To this sketch of St. Medard we will add a few incidents in his life, that may appear insignificant, but from which we may gather an important lesson.

On a dark and stormy night of autumn, a thief entered the garden of St. Medard to steal grapes and other fruits. When on the point of leaving the garden, laden with his ill-gotten spoils, he could neither find the gate nor climb the wall, in spite of every effort to do so, and the next morning found him still wandering about in the garden. He was consequently discovered, and could not deny his criminal intention, as the stolen grapes clung to his hands as if by magic. When about to receive the punishment he deserved, St. Medard arrived, and remembering the prayer: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," he not only rescued the thief from the hands of the angry servants, but having admonished him, set him at liberty, presenting him with the grapes he had stolen.

Upon another occasion a person intended to steal some bee-hives belonging to St. Medard, but the bees attacked the thief, and pursued him so furiously,

that in despair, he at last sought refuge with the Saint, threw himself at his feet, confessed his guilt, and implored his forgiveness. The bees, as if they knew their master, ceased pursuing the thief, and the Saint forgave him.

A man once carried off a heifer that belonged to St. Medard, and to prevent discovery, he stuffed grass into the little bell that hung to the neck of the animal; but scarcely had he reached his house with the stolen property, when the bell commenced to ring of itself, and continued to do so, in whatever place it was concealed. The neighbors, hearing the sound, were greatly amazed, and not knowing the real cause, imagined it to be the precursor of some wonderful event; but the conscience of the thief was awakened by the miraculous ringing, and bitterly weeping, he at last told the people of his crime, and following their advice, led the heifer back to its rightful owner. St. Medard in the goodness of his heart not only pardoned him, but even made a present to the repentant sinner, as he would not let him depart without a token of his forgiveness.

It is quite superfluous for us to say much about the sin of committing theft, because the attentive reader of the Lives of the Saints would scarcely be tempted to steal, but it will not be out of place for us to remark, that he who steals, sells his soul to the devil for the low price of the thing stolen, and he can never redeem it again, but by restoring to the very last cent what he has obtained in an unlawful manner.

We will, however, remind those who suffer from theft to consider that to lose money or other objects, is a very trifling matter compared to the great evil of suspecting innocent persons, or of breaking out into wrathful imprecations and curses, for they thus return to the thief evil for evil, at least in thought and deed. It is true that the thief is in a manner responsible for these evils, but those from whom he stole are also guilty, if they do not resist the temptation to curse and swear, and these sins they must account for themselves. Learn from St. Medard how to act when suffering from such losses.

The thief may be discovered or not, you may even know who he is, but nevertheless forgive him, and pray for him; pray that God may lead him to acknowledge his wickedness and amend his life. Like St. Medard, remember your daily prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;" yes, we may well say forgive us our thefts as we forgive those who have robbed us; for in truth not an hour passes without our defrauding God of something that belongs to him. Reflect how this is to be understood, and ask yourself whether what we have said is not true.

ST. PELAGIA.

(June 9.)

"Suicide."

PELAGIA lived in the city of Antioch, at a time when the persecution of the Christians had broken out. She belonged to a noble and wealthy family, and with many others was accused of being a Christian. She was alone at home, when the satellites appeared to lead her before the tribunal, where she was either to forswear her religion or submit to have her person outraged. The pious maiden was then but fifteen years old; no one was present to advise or assist her in her dreadful situation. She would have willingly undergone all the tortures of the rack for the sake of her Christian faith, but she could not bear the thought of losing her purity, the greatest treasure of her life. What was she to do in this horrible dilemma? She quickly came to a resolution. Without evincing the least fear, she entreated the soldiers to grant her time to dress. The soldiers acceded to her request. The virgin went to her room, implored God to let her appear before Him pure and without stain, then robed herself in a rich garment, ascended the top of the house, from whence she precipitated herself—killing herself instantly.

Was this not suicide? and how then can Pelagia be venerated as a Saint? the reader will perhaps ask. If superficially considered, it looks as if the action of Pelagia was indeed sinful; for suicide is one of the most dreadful of sins; man while in the state of mortal sin,—for to commit suicide is a mortal sin—rushes into the other world, and as it is impossible to return to earth, there is no possibility of repenting and being forgiven. It is for this reason, therefore, that there is no sight so terrible as that of the body of a suicide—it is as if gazing upon the body of one already condemned. And yet even in such cases we may fall into sin ourselves by judging without charity and justice. Very many at the moment of committing suicide were weak in mind or beside themselves with pain, so that, as in the delirium of fever, they knew not what they did, or had lost all self-control; and what man does in a state in which he has neither the use of his reason nor of his free-will, is not imputed to him by God, with the exception of the drunkard, who has reduced himself to such a condition by his own fault. The Church, therefore, does not treat such persons as have taken their own lives while in a state of mental derangement, as suicides, but permits them to be buried in a Christian manner. Besides, God may have granted to many a suicide a grace of perfect repentance, even in the moment when the soul was about being separated from the body. The action of St. Pelagia, however, must not only be regarded as excusable, but even as meritorious; for the horror of having her purity violated, her fidelity to the virtue of

chastity and innocence, and her love for God, were her motives for depriving herself of life. Even if she had been mistaken, inasmuch as suicide is sinful in itself, the purity and faithfulness of her will and intention would by far outweigh her error; but St. Augustine, who on other occasions declares suicide to be a great sin, says regarding such cases, it may well be, that saintly persons have committed such deeds by a special revelation and command of God, like Abraham, who was commanded to sacrifice his son, although it was not allowed for a parent to kill his child without a special revelation from God. The Church venerates the holy virgin Pelagia as a martyr, and St. Chrysostom preached two sermons in her honor, from which we will make a few extracts:

"God be praised and glorified, that women, nay, even maidens, fear not death, but scorn it. This grace has been obtained through Christ, who was Himself born of a virgin, and who conquered and thus weakened the power of death; for if a good shepherd seizes a lion, that had ravaged his flock, and deprives it of its teeth and claws, then even children would laugh at it; in such a manner did Christ conquer death, the terror of our nature, and destroy the horrors that accompany it, so that even virgins now laugh at it. Therefore did the godly virgin Pelagia rush to death with so much joy, that she neither awaited the hand of the executioner nor obeyed the summons of the tribunal, but in joyful and zealous haste anticipated the rage of her enemies; she was ready to undergo every kind of torture and pain, but she feared to lose the crown of her purity. If she could have preserved her purity to the end and have gained a martyr's crown, she would not have refused to appear before the judge; but because she would have been obliged to renounce one, the saintly virgin regarded it as unreasonable to be satisfied with only the crown of martyrdom, when two could be obtained; she therefore determined not to become a victim to the lust of unclean eyes or to permit her pure body to be violated. It is indeed courageous to scorn the executioner, while the body is being tortured, but the action of Pelagia is not less great. Death does not appear dreadful to those who are placed upon the rack; on the contrary they long for it, because it will deliver them from their tortures; but Pelagia as yet felt no bodily pain, her body was still unhurt, and she thus required a great and sublime degree of fortitude to throw herself into the arms of death. Therefore in admiring the firmness and patience of the martyrs, admire also the brave and noble mind of that virgin. Consider what the tender maiden must have felt, when without a human protector being near, she was suddenly surprised by the satellites, who had come to lead her before a tribunal that was to give a decision involving the preservation of her life, her purity, and her faith. We must truly wonder, that she was still able to breathe or move, much less to speak to them. This was not accomplished by natural strength, but by the assistance of God, who saw her good will and noble heart. Therefore we do right to call her blessed, because she

had the grace of God, and was worthy of admiration, because she manifested such a glorious spirit.

"Who is not astonished in hearing that she in a single moment conceived and carried out such a resolution! You all know how, if suddenly discouraged, we often abandon a resolution, when the moment has come to carry it out, although we may have for a long time determined upon fulfilling it; but Pelagia succeeded in a moment in conceiving a terrible resolution, in determining upon, and in carrying it out. Not the fear of the soldiers, who were waiting for her, not the short space of time, nor the want of assistance, nor her being alone when surprised, nor anything else confounded that saintly virgin; she did every thing with as firm and prudent a mind, as if in the midst of friends and acquaintances. And in fact she could be well in such a state of mind, because she was not alone, for Christ Himself was with her as adviser. He was present with the virgin, He awakened and strengthened her heart, and He alone delivered her from all fear. Christ, however, did this not simply for Himself, but because Pelagia had already before shown herself worthy of His assistance.

"As a chamois, if it escapes from the hands of its pursuer, quickly takes refuge on the mountain, out of reach of the hunter or his shaft, and there rests and fearlessly looks down at its pursuer; so also Pelagia, fallen into the hands of her pursuers and caught within the walls of the house, as in a net, escaped; but she did not take refuge on the mountain top, but on the height of heaven, whither it was impossible for them to pursue her. From thence she looked down and rejoiced, as her pursuers were obliged to return disgraced and empty-handed. Imagine the wrath and mortification of the judge and executioners, when the soldiers came back without the maiden! Joseph in Egypt left his garment in the hands of the wicked woman and escaped; but Pelagia left behind her body, and while her soul, freed from all earthly fetters, ascended to heaven, even her body remained untouched by the hands of those unclean men. Her body lay on the ground, but was not on that account dishonored, for even the ground became honored thereby from having received the venerable body. The Angels surrounded her remains, all the Archangels honored them, and Christ Himself was present; she lay there, clothed in a garment more precious than royal purple; it was the two-fold garment of purity and of martyrdom. O maiden, in sex a woman, but in soul a man! O virgin, worthy of being praised with double titles of honor, because thou art reckoned not only among the choir of virgins but among the host of martyrs! O maiden, so chaste that thou didst not even permit the wicked judge to gaze upon thee! Let us imitate the chastity of Pelagia, resist and conquer our passions, and incite our souls to works of piety, so that our limbs may lose the power of sinning; may we also clothe ourselves in life and death with the glorious garment of virtue;—then will the Lord change our wretched body so that it will, like

His, become refulgent with celestial beauty. To Him therefore be glory and power forever! Amen."

ST. MARGARET.

(June 10.)

"The Christian Wife."

WHAT should we say of a mother, who provided faithfully for all the bodily wants of her children, but gave herself not the least concern for the wants of their souls, and thus let them grow up without religion? Would it not be just to call her a bad mother? Certainly, but not less bad and wicked is the wife, who does all in her power to make the sensual and worldly life most agreeable to her husband, while she does nothing and cares nothing for the welfare of his immortal soul, although it may be in the greatest danger. The number of such careless and wicked wives, who attend only to the bodily wants of their husbands, is very large, especially among the higher classes of society. And yet we are about to speak of a woman, who occupied the highest rank in society, of one who has shown by her life, what a wife can and should do for the soul of her husband—we intend speaking of queen *Margaret of Scotland.*

More than eight hundred years ago Malcolm was crowned king of Scotland. His father, the former king of that country, had been deprived of his life and crown by Macbeth; but Malcolm, his son and heir, escaped and long wandered about homeless, until St. Edward, the Confessor, king of England, provided him with an army of ten thousand men, by means of which he conquered the forces of Macbeth, the murderer of his father, and regained possession of the Scottish throne. Meanwhile the king of England died, and a Norman, who earned for himself the title of William the Conquerer, took possession of the throne. Edgar Etheling, the nearest relative and heir of the king, escaped from England with his sister Margaret, but a violent storm drove the ship which carried the royal prince and princess to the coast of Scotland. King Malcolm received the persecuted orphans in the most friendly manner, and when king William of England demanded that they should be delivered up, Malcolm determined rather to risk a war, than to deliver up his guests to the tyrant of England. In consequence a war broke out between the Scotch and English, but for once the right prevailed and the English were defeated.

What we relate now concerning Margaret, is taken from an account, left by her confessor Theodoric, who says: "When Margaret was still very young, she

led a retired life and began to love God above all things, and to improve her mind, by reading religious books. She had a penetrating mind, an excellent memory, a charming manner of expressing herself; and sitting like another Mary at the feet of the Lord, she rejoiced in the word of God. By the providence of God, and submitting to the wish of her friends, she became the wife of king Malcolm, and although she was then obliged to occupy herself with worldly affairs, her heart was never enthralled by them. She sought before all things the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and the grace of the Almighty blessed her abundantly with honor and riches.

"Margaret caused a splendid church to be built in honor of the Blessed Trinity, in the place where her marriage had been celebrated, thinking that this might prove a threefold blessing, that is, for the king, for herself, and for their descendants. She endowed the Church with the most costly ornaments, and her own room looked like a factory of church-vestments, so filled was it with articles to be used at the altar. The queen was endowed with such firmness, but also with such kindness, that the people feared and loved her at the same time. No one dared to utter an improper word in her presence, and her whole manner of living in general, was such that she could well be looked upon as a model of virtue. Her speech was seasoned with the salt of wisdom, her silence full of good thoughts—and in all she said and did, the godliness of her mind shone forth.

"She bestowed no less care upon the education of her children, than she did upon her own soul. A servant, in whom she had much confidence, was ordered to watch their behavior closely, and her own pious zeal had such a good effect, that her children surpassed in deportment, morality and good breeding such even as were more advanced in years. They never quarreled, but were always kind to each other, and the youngest child always gave precedence to the elder. She frequently sent for them to instruct them in regard to the doctrine of Christ, and she endeavored to implant in their young hearts the fear of the Lord. 'O, my children,' she would say, 'fear the Lord; for those who fear Him, will never be in want, and if you love Him, He will bestow upon you His blessing in this life, and in the world to come you will enjoy the company of all the Saints.' It was the desire, the exhortation, the daily and constant prayer of the mother, that her children might recognize, love and honor God, and thus obtain the glory of the heavenly kingdom.

"In the same manner also did she labor for the salvation of the king. She succeeded in her efforts, with the assistance of God, in making him just, compassionate, and charitable; and animated by her exhortations and example he spent many nights in watching and fervent prayer. It was a great miracle of divine mercy, to see this worldly man give himself to prayer with such zeal and contrition of heart; and because he was convinced that Christ truly dwelt in the heart of the queen, he feared to offend her in any way. He was therefore always

ready to comply with her wishes and prudent counsels, and he rejected what was rejected by her, and loved what she loved out of love to her."

After having related how St. Margaret united with persevering devotion and the most rigid fasting, works of unbounded charity, her Confessor says farther, that she also prevailed upon the king to unite with her in serving the poor. "Three hundred poor persons were daily admitted into the royal hall, where seats were prepared for them, and after the doors were closed, the king and the queen served them with meat and drink, and thus served Christ by serving the poor."

The Confessor gives us also a detailed account of the edifying death of the queen, and says:

"She foresaw her death, and having expressed a desire to speak alone with me, she reviewed once more her whole course of life, shedding meanwhile many tears. I myself could not refrain from weeping, and our tears prevented us sometimes from speaking. Having acquainted me with what she thought most essential, she continued: 'Farewell my Father, I shall live but a short time. Two things I will ask of you: remember me in your masses and prayers as long as you live, and take care of my sons and daughters, and desist not from urging them to fear and love God. And when you see that one of them has reached the pinnacle of earthly greatness, then spare not the exhortation and warnings of a father and teacher, that he or she may not be elated with pride, nor offend God by giving way to ambition, and thus neglect eternal happiness for worldly success. You must promise me now in the presence of God, that you are willing to fulfill my wishes.'

"Not long after she became dangerously ill, and four days before her death, when the king was far away with his army and she was without news from him, she said to us: 'To-day a great calamity will befall the country, such as has not happened for a long time.' We paid no particular attention to her words, until several days later the news came, that the king had lost his life the very day upon which the queen had made the remark. In a presentiment of future events it had been her desire to prevent him from going forth with his army, but he had this time refused to listen to her warning and request.

"When the queen was dying, her oldest son, who had just arrived from the army, entered the room. His heart was very much oppressed; he had come to inform his mother, that his father and brother had fallen on the battle-field, and he found his beloved mother also in a dying condition. The queen, who appeared to be breathing her last, collected her thoughts and addressed her son, whose heart was filled with the most bitter grief, and inquired after his father and brother. He hesitated about telling her the truth, as he feared that the dreadful news might accelerate the death of his beloved mother, and he replied therefore, that they were well; but the queen sighed deeply and said: 'I know, I know, but I conjure thee by the Holy Cross in my hand, to tell me the whole truth. The son therefore informed her of the sad event, and St. Margaret,

instead of breaking out into violent lamentations, or falling into a swoon, after the manner of ordinary women, in the fullness of her Christian soul raised her hands and eyes to heaven and broke forth into praises and thanks to God, saying: 'I praise and thank Thee, almighty God, that in my last moments Thou hast visited me with such great affliction, and thus purified me, as I hope, from the stains of my sins.'

"Margaret now felt that death had come; she repeated the words which the priest says before the communion: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who according to the will of the Father through the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, hast by thy death given life to the word, deliver me;'—and with the words: 'deliver me'—her soul was freed from the fetters of the body and ascended to the Lord of true freedom, whom she had always loved—to Christ."

The body of queen Margaret, with that of her husband, was buried in the church which she had built in commemoration of her marriage. One hundred and sixty-seven years later, upon the occasion of her canonization, when her body was taken from the tomb to be exhibited for public veneration, the following miracle is said to have occurred. Great solemnities accompanied the opening of the tomb, and her mortal remains were placed in a shrine of silver and then carried in procession into the choir of the church, dukes and earls regarding it an honor to be among the bearers. When the procession reached the place where king Malcolm was buried, the bier, in spite of all efforts, could not be removed from the spot, and one of the oldest men present advised them to disinter the mortal remains of the king and remove them with those of the queen. This was done, and the bier could then be easily moved, and thus the relics of both were exhibited for the veneration of the faithful. When Scotland afterwards became protestant, the Catholics removed the remains of the royal couple, and they were taken to Spain, where King Philip II. built a chapel for their veneration in the magnificent convent of the Escurial. Here their remains are united in *one* coffin, bearing the inscription: "St. Malcolm, King, and St. Margaret, Queen."

If the soul of king Malcolm is united with that of St. Margaret in holiness and bliss in heaven, as both were united during their earthly life, and are still in their earthly remains, then the merit is especially due to St. Margaret, who reformed her husband, a man who in the beginning of their earthly union was still far from being a perfect Christian. The first thing necessary for a wife if she wishes to convert her husband, is to be herself truly penetrated with the love of Christ. He will not rest in her until she has also brought her husband to Him, and He will ennoble all her actions, so that her husband will learn to regard the beauty and excellence of Christianity, and finally to love it. It is further necessary that she should continually pray for him and use every opportunity to persuade him with gentleness and kindness, to desist from his sinful habits, to avoid bad company, to accompany her to church, to receive the holy

sacraments, and to read religious books. As long as a wife manifests no zeal and care in this regard, then she is herself destitute of true religion, and her love is only sensuality.

ST. BARNABAS.

(June 11.)

"To labor for the glory of God."

BARNABAS signifies "son of comfort," and the name was probably given to this Saint by the Apostles, because he possessed the particular gift of comforting others. He had formerly been called Joseph. He is said to have been one of the seventy disciples, and after the ascension of Christ he sold his inheritance, as many others of the faithful did, for the purpose of giving the price to the Apostles. When Paul after his conversion came to Jerusalem, he went to Barnabas to be taken by him to the Apostles Peter and James, for Paul and Barnabas are said to have been previously intimately acquainted with each other, as they had both together received instruction from Gamaliel.

Antioch was then one of the largest and most beautiful cities of the world; it numbered many Jews among its inhabitants, and among them Christianity soon took effect, even before the real Apostles had come to the city. In order that this new Christian community might be regularly established and its interest promoted, the Apostles in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch, who strengthened the Christian inhabitants in their faith, and by his preaching, gained constantly new souls to Christ. At that time, Paul lived at Tarsus, but to procure for himself the assistance of his friend, Barnabas went to that city and took Paul back with him to Antioch, where they labored together a whole year for the propagation of Christianity, and it was during this time that the name of CHRISTIANS was first applied to the faithful. Judea was then suffering from a great famine, which had lasted about four years, and the Christians of Antioch collected alms for the support of the faithful in Judea, and handed them to Barnabas and Paul, who were commissioned to carry them to the Church in Jerusalem. When they returned to Antioch, where Christianity was rapidly progressing, the Apostles and teachers of the Church assembled for devotion and fasting, and the Holy Ghost revealed to them, that Barnabas and Paul were called to a particular mission, to that of spreading the faith among the Gentiles.

Before we continue the relation of their missionary travels, we will first make a comparison or draw a parallel between these two men. Barnabas was the first of the two, who had been called to the faith, and he had known and conversed with the Lord. Paul had once been an enemy of Christianity, and was afterwards converted, as if by force. When after his conversion he returned to Jerusalem, and the Christians there, on account of his former persecutions, looked upon him with distrust and aversion, Barnabas interested himself in his behalf and, as it were, answered for him, so that he was almost like a guardian to Paul. Barnabas, for the reason that he had been sent and authorized by the Apostles in Jerusalem, was the first superior of the Christian community in Antioch; Paul was only called by Barnabas to assist him in his office. St. Luke in the acts of the Apostles, when he speaks of these two great Apostles, always mentions Barnabas before Paul. The former was even distinguished for his personal accomplishments; thus we are told by ancient writers, that his figure was venerable and majestic, while Paul, according to St. Chrysostom, is said to have been of small stature. And yet Barnabas always yielded and gave the precedence to Paul whenever they went together to preach the Gospel. Those who know the world, know how very difficult it is to find a person who does not envy the pre-eminence or superiority of another of equal rank and office; even priests, who are known to be pious and zealous men, are frequently displeased in seeing other priests at their side preferred as preachers or confessors; for all zeal is not of God, not even religious zeal; many seek, without their knowing it, more their own honor, than the promotion of the honor and cause of God. Such as these are not willing to yield precedence to another, even if God has visibly provided him with greater talents for preaching the Gospel; but they, whose only desire it is, to see THE NAME OF GOD HALLOWED, AND HIS KINGDOM COME ON EARTH, greatly rejoice, if God awakens others and endows them still more richly than themselves to labor for the kingdom and FOR THE GLORY OF GOD. And thus did Barnabas, the Apostle, act, when he saw that Paul was intended to be a still greater instrument than himself in the hand of God.

Barnabas and Paul followed the call of the Holy Ghost and visited different countries and cities, everywhere preaching the Gospel. In some places they were on that account persecuted, especially by the Jews, who frequently instigated the Gentiles to maltreat them. Thus, for instance, Paul had miraculously cured a lame man in Lystra, and the pagans therefore imagined that Paul and Barnabas were two of their gods;—Barnabas, because he was tall and handsome, they called Jupiter, the highest God, and Paul the god Mercury. The priests of the idols procured oxen and prepared garlands for the purpose of sacrificing to the two supposed gods. Only with great difficulty did Paul and Barnabas prevent them from doing so, and the Acts of the Apostles say: "Which when the apostles Barnabas and Paul had heard, rending their clothes, they ran among the people, crying out, and saying: O men, why do ye these

things. We also are mortals, men like unto you, preaching to you to be converted from these vain things to the living God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them." Soon, however, the fickleness of the people was shown; instigated by wicked Jews, they stoned Paul and dragged him as if dead before the city; but he recovered and continued his journey with Barnabas; they came to the city of Derbe, where many were converted to the faith of Christ. They visited all the places where they had previously been, for the purpose of strengthening the newly converted in their faith, and of appointing priests—and finally they returned to Antioch.

Barnabas and Paul related in the presence of the Christian community what God had accomplished through their instrumentality, and how He had brought the Gentiles also to the faith. But then the Jewish Christians, that is those Jews who had become Christians, declared that all the Gentiles who had been converted to Christianity, must be circumcised, and must observe the laws of Moses, or in other words, must first become Jews, in order to be Christians. Paul and Barnabas zealously opposed this, but so as to be perfectly certain, the community of Antioch resolved to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, for the sake of conferring with the other Apostles and priests in reference to the affair. Here then was held the first council of the Church, and after mature consideration, with the assistance of the Holy Ghost, the opinion of the Apostles Barnabas and Paul was declared correct, and it was decided, that the obligation of circumcision and such Mosaic commandments was not to be imposed on those converted from paganism. After Barnabas and Paul had returned to Antioch with this decision of the heads of the Church, they continued to preach there the word of God, resumed their missionary travels and re-visited the places where they had already established Christianity. Paul was accompanied by Silas and went to Syria, and Barnabas, accompanied by Mark, a relative of his, went to his native country, the island of Cyprus, there to labor especially for the salvation of his fellow-countrymen. So far are we informed of the life of Barnabas, in the Acts of the Apostles, and what we know concerning his life and death is based on later accounts. He is said to have first established a Christian community in Milan, and we know that the inhabitants of that city venerate him as their Patron; then to have afterwards rejoined the Apostle Paul and to have been sent by him with Titus to Corinth; finally to have suffered death in the place where he had been especially active in the cause of religion, that is, on the island of Cyprus. By the preaching, miracles, and example of the Apostle, the Christian faith was daily on the increase, but he is said to have been stoned to death by the Jews in the city of Salamis, on the island of Cyprus. We are also told that the spot where he had been buried was unknown for several hundred years, but many miracles afterwards occurred in that place, so that it was called THE PLACE OF HEALTH, without the cause of the miracles being known; and finally it is said, that St. Barnabas appeared

to the Bishop of Salamis and designated to him the spot where he was buried. The grave was opened, and it is reported, that there was found upon the breast of the holy body, the Gospel of St. Matthew, which St. Barnabas is said to have written with his own hands.

ST. ESKIL.

(June 12.)

"God's Judgments are unsearchable"

THE little grain of mustard-seed, of which our Saviour speaks, not only puts forth leaves and branches, but produces also new grains, that perfectly resemble the little grain first planted. The Catholic Church is the tree which has grown up from Jesus Christ, who was the grain of mustard-seed sown in the ground; and the Catholic Church has produced and still produces men, who resemble Christ in so far that they have also spread the truth and died for the faith, and that from their preaching and in their blood new elements of the Church have again sprung up. Such men were the Apostles and many of the martyrs, and such a man also was St. Eskil, the saint whose feast we to-day commemorate. Under the date of February 3, was related how St. Ansgarius had propagated the faith in Sweden, but as sometimes in the month of March the weather is beautiful and warm, the woods and fields begin to look green, and nature rejoices in the belief that spring has come, when suddenly snow and piercing winds re-visit the earth, as though winter would resume its sceptre, so also did the dreary winter of paganism return to Sweden after the death of St. Ansgarius. St. Sigefride, Archbishop of York, in England, resolved therefore to go to Sweden for the purpose, with the assistance of God, of re-converting the Swedes to Christianity, and he took with him St. Eskil, of whom an old Swedish chronicle relates the following:

"St. Eskil, even in his early youth, despised the allurements of the world, and was entirely penetrated with the love of God. Instructed in the writings of the divine law, he drank eagerly and zealously from this sweet stream, so that he was enabled at a later period to fill and present to many the cup of salvation. When he had attained the age of manhood, God called upon him as He once did upon Abraham:

"Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and magnify thy name, and thou shalt be blessed." (Genesis 12 : 1, 2.)

"Notwithstanding the love he bore his parents and native country, he left

England and went to Sweden, convinced that the farther he withdrew from home and earthly ties, the nearer he approached to heaven."

After Eskil and the pious Bishop had again rekindled in Sweden the extinct light of Christianity, so that even Ingo, the king, had become a Christian, St. Sigefride returned to England. In accordance with the wish of the king and people, he, before his departure, consecrated St. Eskil Bishop of Sweden, and, continues the chronicle: "Eskil shone like the morning-star in the darkness, and brought back by the light of his holy teaching many who were wandering about having lost the right way in the path leading to heaven. The faithful were roused and touched by the power of his excellent preaching, so that they commenced to build churches and to destroy the temples of the idols and the places where they had formerly brought idolatrous sacrifices. But Satan, the enemy of salvation, saw with envy that the number of his followers was daily diminishing, while on the other hand the cause of Christ triumphed by the daily increasing number of the faithful; he therefore laid a plot for the destruction of the shepherd's life, in order that the scattered sheep might fall a prey to the wolves of hell. This enemy, whose very breath ignites coal, instigated wicked men, who were already inclined to return to the paths of sin, to a violent hatred and envy against king Ingo, the defender of the Christian faith. Seeing that they could not carry on their unlawful practices under the rule of Ingo, they collected an army, defeated the king and expelled him from his kingdom. Like the Israelites, who would not submit to the rule of Rohoboam, although the temple, in which the true God was worshiped, was in his dominion, but chose Jeroboam for their king, by whose advice they became idolators and worshiped calves: so after the expulsion of Ingo the Swedes chose as their king an idolator, a wicked man unworthy of the royal dignity. He was called Blodswen (or man of blood) and he deserved his name, because he permitted his subjects to drink the blood of animals consecrated to the idols, and to eat the flesh of idolatrous sacrifices. After their victory the idolators with their king assembled in a place where they offered up oxen and sheep to their idols, and where they also celebrated a great banquet; but while they were feasting and felicitating the new king on his success, Eskil, like a second Elias, who likewise feared neither prince nor ruler, set out, and clothed in righteousness as in a coat of mail, covered by the shield of faith, and armed with the sword of the spirit, that is the word of God, stepped fearlessly before the idolators and reproached them with having forgotten the Lord, their Creator, and with sacrificing to idols, but not to the true God. They however closed their ears in order not to hear the law of God, and murmured while he spoke; and when the holy man perceived this, he raised his eyes and hands towards heaven, and implored God to give some sign, so that the stony hearts of the faithless might recognize Him as the only true God.

"After his prayer the same wonderful sign was repeated as had happened

in answer to the prayer of Samuel against the Philistines, for with a loud crash the thunder of the Lord resounded, hail, snow, and rain poured down upon the altars and sacrifices of the idolators and destroyed them, but not a single drop of rain fell upon the Bishop and those with him. When the sons of Belial saw this, they were greatly enraged, and one of them threw a stone at the Bishop, and another clove his head open with an axe. In order that it might not appear that he had been maltreated, they dragged the nearly expiring martyr to the king, saying that he had caused the elements to war against them by means of witchcraft, in order to offend the new king and the gods. And the king immediately sentenced him to be put to death, and he was dragged upon the top of a mountain and there stoned to death, because he had shown so much zeal for his faith. Thus Eskil closed his temporal life, and began to enjoy eternal bliss in heaven.

"But as in the time of Achab, when the prophets of the Lord were put to death and idols were worshiped, God had still preserved seven thousand men who did not bend their knees before Baal; so also were there many of the faithful who had not consented to, nor participated in the atrocious acts of the apostates and rebels. They carried off the body of the martyr in order to bury it; but when they came to the place which is now called Eskilstuna, the air became so darkened by a thick fog that they could not go farther. This was regarded as a sign that the body of the martyr should be there entombed, and a church and convent were built on that place for the veneration of the martyr. Astonishing miracles occurred after his interment, so that in the fold of the Lord the wolves became changed into sheep, and the persecutors of the Church into her protectors."

From that time Christianity prospered in Sweden, and about sixty monasteries were afterwards established there, by which religion, agriculture and the arts were cultivated and spread over the whole country. The spirit of Christ was so generally diffused among the people, that king Eric, ten Bishops and many other Swedes were canonized. The priests of Sweden were distinguished for their Christian morality, and the people showed them every mark of respect and love. At the very time when the so-called reformation had commenced in Germany, the Swedish people joyously celebrated the canonization of two of their countrymen—Hemming and Nicholas—and they had still the happiness of being governed by truly pious and Catholic princes. Gustavus Wasa, however, by means of a victorious war, obtained possession of the kingdom, and believing that the introduction of the Lutheran doctrine would strengthen his throne, he made use of every species of craft and violence in order to convert the whole country to the Lutheran faith. In vain did the poor people in some parts of the country rise up and seek to defend their most precious treasure, the Catholic faith. The king used every effort in his power to accomplish his design, and thus through his means and that of later princes has the Catholic

faith at last been so thoroughly extirpated in Sweden, that at the present day every Swede who becomes a Catholic, is obliged to leave the country.

Perhaps, you will ask, dear reader, how could God permit the laborious and arduous work of the holy missionaries of the Catholic Church, who had established the Christian faith in Sweden, to be destroyed again by worldly power,—and how could He permit a whole country which had formerly been heartily and faithfully devoted to the Catholic faith, to be robbed and defrauded of its religion, so that it has for several centuries lain like a great branch, cut off from the living tree of the Church? If you ask, how can God permit this? we will simply answer, that we know not; but that is no reason why we should doubt the infinite power, goodness, and wisdom of God, and it only shows us the insignificance and weakness of our understanding. We say with Paul, the Apostle, and if you do not place too high a value upon your understanding, you will say with us: "O the depth of the riches, of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor?" (Rom. 11 : 33–35.) This passage is found in the epistle to the Romans, where the Apostle speaks of the faithlessness of the Jews, who were formerly the chosen people of God, but he adds, that at the proper time all Israel will return to the faith, and we may therefore cherish the hope also, that Sweden will be brought back again to the Catholic Church—in a manner and at a time only known to God. Yet as often as you say the words: "Thy kingdom come!" remember the Swedish people and offer up your prayer in their behalf, praying that the faith and sacraments of the Catholic Church may fall again to their share.

ST. ANTHONY.

(June 13.)

"The Tongue."

St. Anthony was the son of an officer of high rank in Portugal, and received the name of Ferdinand in baptism. The world and its pleasures had no charm for him, and his only desire was to devote himself to the service of the Church. He lived for some time among the Augustinian Friars in Lisbon, his native city; but disturbed by the frequent visits of friends and relatives, he was at his own wish removed to a convent in Coimbra, at some distance from Lisbon. Here he employed his time in the study of theology and in sanctifying his soul by prayer and other exercises of piety. He had lived for eight years in this seclusion from

the world, advancing daily in the knowledge and love of God, when the bodies of some Franciscans, who had preached the Gospel in Morocco, and there suffered martyrdom, were brought to Coimbra. While the worldly-minded man shrinks from such a fate, the sight of the bodies of the martyrs awakened in the heart of Anthony a wish to suffer also for Christ. This desire was not like a fire made of straw, that suddenly flames up and soon dies out again, but his heart was entirely filled with the thought of joining the order of St. Francis of Assisi, because it offered him a better opportunity of being sent as a missionary to the heathen, and according to the laws of the Church he was permitted to leave his order and join a more rigid one. He was encouraged and assisted in carrying out his intention by some Franciscan Friars, who had come to Coimbra and had visited Anthony's convent, collecting alms. After he had joined the order, he begged the superiors to send him to Africa, so that he might preach the Gospel to the Mohammedans, and, as he hoped, die the death of a martyr. A lingering disease, however, obliged him to leave Africa. On his return to Europe it so happened, that St. Francis, the founder of the order, had convened a general chapter, at which the superiors of all Franciscan convents assembled. Anthony offered himself for employment, but because he had in his humility concealed his great learning, and was besides still delicate, they thought him unfit for service and refused to receive him in the convent; one of the superiors, however, had compassion on the plain-looking man and sent him to a small convent near Bologna; here Anthony led a quiet and austere life, and seems to have thought himself no longer fit or worthy to labor in the world for the kingdom of God.

The plan of life, however, marked out for man by Almighty God, differs very much from that which man marks out for himself. The former design of Anthony to labor and die as a missionary among the enemies of Christianity had not been in harmony with that laid down for him by divine Providence, and so also was his later intention of living and dying in seclusion from the world.

Upon one occasion several Franciscans and members of other orders had been sent to Forli to be ordained; Anthony was among them. The Bishop commanded that one of them should address the community in an edifying manner, but they excused themselves by saying, that they were not prepared. Finally he called also upon Anthony, who in his humility declared that he was better able to wash dishes in the kitchen, than to preach the word of God; but the Bishop providentially insisted upon his demand being complied with, and Anthony ascended the pulpit, and began at first to speak in a very simple manner. In the course of his sermon, however, he became more and more animated by the Holy Ghost, and he discoursed upon the divine mysteries of religion with such wonderful eloquence and depth of reasoning, that all were astonished, and confessed never to have heard such a sermon before. Henceforth the brethren revered St. Anthony, not only on account of his extra-

ordinary wisdom, but also on account of the humility that had caused him to conceal his great learning for so long a time.

St. Francis having been informed of the remarkable talents of Anthony, commanded that he should be entrusted with the office of teaching and preaching, and Anthony distinguished himself so greatly in this capacity, that he was in his time regarded as the most eloquent preacher in the Church. He declared the truth with unheard-of fearlessness, and censured both high and low; but his severity was also united with charity and grace, so that his sermons instilled fear and love into the hearts and minds of his hearers. He went from village to village, and from city to city, preaching with a wisdom inspired from above, so that his sermons were always adapted to the various conditions of the people. The Pope himself called the saintly man "the ark of the covenant," meaning thereby, that heavenly gifts and treasures were given him in trust. The general desire of hearing him preach was so great, that shops, and the courts of justice were closed and the public squares deserted, and sometimes over thirty thousand persons assembled for the purpose of hearing him proclaim the word of God. He therefore usually preached in the open air, for even the largest churches were not capable of holding the numbers of hearers. His words like arrows pierced the hearts of the people; tears, sighs, and a horror of sin were the immediate effects of his exhortations, but a much more gratifying result consisted in the disappearance of hatred, envy, usury, and licentiousness in all places where he preached, and—as the sun in spring-time not only melts the snow and ice, but also calls from the earth grass and flowers—so also did Anthony succeed in causing virtue to spring up in the hearts of those who had been previously addicted to vice. We will mention but a few instances of the effects produced by this great preacher. On a certain occasion a band of robbers, who had committed many thefts and murders, went out of curiosity to the church where Anthony was preaching, in order to hear the man whose name was on the lips of every one; but the words of St. Anthony produced such an effect upon these wicked men, that having entered the church as murderers, they left it as repenting sinners. They entreated him to hear their confession, listened most humbly to his admonitions, performed most willingly the penances he imposed upon them, and henceforth led the lives of Christians.

The fearlessness of St. Anthony in moving the hearts of his hearers by the most dreadful truths is shown in another instance. In his time it was customary for priests in their funeral discourses, to attribute to the deceased virtues which they had never possessed, thus, as it were, canonizing them. It so happened, that a very rich man died, whose avarice was well known, and St. Anthony was requested to preach his funeral sermon. He selected for his text the following passage: "Where the treasure is, there will be the heart also" (Matt. 6 : 21), and demonstrated the great folly of continually striving and toiling for money, or earthly treasures, thereby neglecting and losing the immortal soul's salvation,

and the treasures of heaven. "But that you may see," he continued, "whither avarice leads man, know that the soul of this dead man, whose body lies before me, is buried in the fire of hell, and his heart is to be found in his treasure-chest." We are told, that several who heard the funeral sermon, went to the house of the deceased, where they opened the chest and found amidst the money a heart still palpitating.

At the time when Anthony traveled over all Italy, proclaiming the word of God, Eccellino, a great tyrant, governed Upper Italy. For fifteen years he committed the most unheard of cruelties in the cities he had conquered; thus for instance, in the city of Padua, on a single day, 12,000 persons were put to death, because the inhabitants had attempted to shake off his yoke. An ancient work therefore calls him a wild beast, a blood-thirsty tiger. Anthony had heard of the cruel treatment of the people by their wicked ruler, whom they had not the courage to resist, and he now proved that in him dwelt the spirit of the good Shepherd, who risks even his life for his sheep. Anthony went to Verona, where Eccellino resided, and demanded to be led into the presence of the prince. Eccellino was seated on his throne, surrounded by his satellites, who were ready at any moment to obey the slightest command of their terrible ruler.

The poor friar, however, appeared before the tyrant with as little fear as though he possessed all power, and the man upon the throne was a poor sinner held in fetters. He reproached him for the streams of innocent blood he had shed, for the crimes and robberies he had committed, and told him that the vengeance of heaven would soon overtake him. The courtiers only waited for the word to hew the bold priest to pieces with their swords, as they had often been ordered to do on occasions of much less importance; but Eccellino turned pale and commenced to tremble, left his throne, threw himself at the feet of St. Anthony, and as a sign of repentance, placed his girdle around his neck, confessed, bitterly weeping for his great guilt, and conjured the Saint to implore God to forgive him.

These are a few of the many instances that might be cited, to show the grand and beneficial results of the labors of St. Anthony for the cause of God. During the latter part of his life he labored in the city of Padua, where he died at the age of thirty-six. When he yielded up his spirit, the children ran through the streets exclaiming, as if by divine inspiration: "The Saint is dead, the Saint is dead!"—and in the distant city of Lisbon, the bells are said to have commenced ringing without human assistance. Thirty years after his death, in the year 1231, the city of Padua built a splendid church in honor of St. Anthony, and when the grave was opened in order to place his remains as relics, worthy of veneration, in the new edifice, it was found that his whole body, like that of others who had been buried for a long time, had become dust, but that his tongue had remained as fresh and red as that of a living and healthy person. St. Bonaventure, who was present as General of the Franciscan order, took the

tongue into his hand, kissed it reverently, and said: "O happy tongue, that has always praised God, and caused others to praise Him, now is strikingly shown by thy miraculous preservation, how agreeable thy service was to God."

This tongue, enclosed in a costly reliquary, is still exhibited and venerated in the church of St. Anthony in Padua, as is that of St. John Nepomucen in the city of Prague. The tongues of both Saints were glorified through the miracle of incorruptibility, the one on account of the virtue of silence, the other for having never spoken but in praise of God; and the Almighty has thereby shown, how important in His eyes is this little member of the human body for the accomplishment of either good or evil.

Imagine, dear reader, every word that you have ever spoken during your whole life, marked down in a book, and you compelled to read this book; you would then see before you, clearly and distinctly as in a mirror, the true character of your soul, and you would perhaps shrink from the vanity, emptiness, falsehood, enmity, impurity, and avarice there exhibited; for out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh. KNOW THEN THAT THERE IS SUCH A BOOK, WHEREIN ALL YOUR WORDS ARE WRITTEN DOWN—and you will be called upon to reap from it on the day of judgment; this book is the eternal memory of God, and an exact copy of it you will find hereafter in your conscience.

Listen then to good advice: keep a strict account of every word that you have uttered through the day, and you will find how much there is in you of evil and how little of good. Beware therefore and use all your energy, in order that your tongue may not become for you a key to hell, but to heaven!

ST. BASIL.

(June 14.)

"Friendship."

LOOKING up to heaven by night, we see the stars sparkling in the dark blue sky; but if God looks down upon the earth, there are stars also visible to Him, shining forth from the darkness of the world, and these stars are the saints living on earth. But as the stars in the firmament of heaven differ in magnitude and brightness, so also do the saints; and as there are stars that, as it were, belong to and move around each other, and are therefore called double-stars, so among the saints do we find many who are and were united together in the bonds of intimate friendship.

St. Basil, the saint whose festival the Church to-day commemorates, was a star of the first magnitude, and if considered in connection with his friend St.

Gregory of Nazianzen, he may indeed be regarded as a double-star, eulogized as he has been by four of the most celebrated fathers of the Church.

St. Basil was born about the year 329 after Christ, nearly at the same time as was his friend Gregory of Nazianzen. He was of noble descent, but this advantage of birth he valued as little as he did the beauty, strength and physical perfection of body with which nature had endowed him. Devoting himself in his youth to the study of sciences, his uncommon and rapid progress in them, not only astonished his teachers, but soon made him even excel them in learning, so that he became celebrated and honored by all classes of society. The orators admired his rare gift of eloquence, the philosophers looked upon him as a true sage, and the Christians venerated him as if he had been a Bishop, although he had not as yet been ordained a priest. His industry, however, and perseverance in learning, his great talents, by which he surpassed so many others, and the vast amount of knowledge he had attained, he used only as means for the high object he had in view, which was to serve God in the best and most effective manner.

After St. Basil had lived for some time in Cesarea and Constantinople he went to Athens, which city was at that time regarded as the most celebrated seat of learning, and here began his friendship with St. Gregory. They lived together, ate at the same table, and labored for the same end, for the possession of knowledge and virtue. After the death of St. Basil, St. Gregory said: "How can I mention what I am about to say without shedding tears? Learning,—a pursuit that so easily and frequently excites feelings of jealousy, was what we both sought to obtain, without envying each other, without contending with each other for the first rank; for each of us was ready to yield to the other—each of us regarded the fame of the other as his own; one soul animated our two bodies. We labored and struggled only for virtue, and we endeavored to live in such a manner that we could hope to obtain life everlasting. We thought but little of the things of this world and strove with energy to prepare ourselves for another and a better world. We knew no guide but the law of God, and if I was not afraid of being accused of vanity, I would say that one was the rule by which the other discerned right from wrong. While others endeavored to obtain glory and honor in the eyes of the world, our highest ambition was to be called, and to be in truth, good Christians."

There are many persons who during their whole lives are without a friend. This frequently indicates, on their part, a distrustful, selfish and repulsive character; but many are also friendless because they are surrounded by wicked men whose friendship they do not desire. Hence, so many young people of opposite sexes cultivate an intimacy which often results in their ruin, because such an intimacy is almost always commenced without any prospect or intention of marriage; they simply endeavor in this dangerous manner to supply the desire of friendship which exists in every human heart, so that there is a species of friend-

ship which is in fact not worthy of the name, as for instance such as proceeds from, and is based upon, selfish motives, or a wish to be amused by constant intercourse.

Friendships of this kind are not unfrequent, but as a general rule they will not stand a test. True friendship is commonly met with only among good Christians; for where the feelings of nature are consecrated and sanctified, it is a union of immortal spirits, and therefore it is immortal in itself. Of such a nature was the friendship between Basil and Gregory, and the latter in speaking of it says most beautifully: "Love of the body is perishable, because it relates to and is founded upon perishable things, and it will pass away like the flowers of the spring. Just as the flame dies out when the fuel is consumed, does sensual love expire as soon as the exciting cause has ceased to exist. A pure and divine love, however, for the reason that it relates to and proceeds from imperishable things, is on that account lasting, and the more it contemplates the truths of salvation, the more does it attract and unite the lovers of the Eternal."

Athens was a dangerous and seductive city for young men. Besides the general corruption of manners, paganism in its pomp and pride still reigned there: but their mutual friendship protected St. Basil and Gregory from all danger; each had a double guardian of virtue: his own conscience and his friend. They avoided all intercourse with the haughty and volatile students, for they believed it a species of self-deception to mingle with sinners and to fancy that they could reform them; on the contrary they knew that they had cause to fear being infected with their wickedness.

Basil was thirty years old when he returned to his native country, Cappadocia, where he was induced to give public instruction and to act as an advocate in matters of law; but his friend Gregory prevailed upon him to espouse something better, which was to withdraw from the world and to devote all his strength to God. Basil therefore sold the greater part of his estates, gave the proceeds to the poor, visited the monks and hermits in order to become acquainted with their manner of living, as his desire was to imitate it. He then withdrew into solitude and began to lead a life of mortification and holiness. He slept on the bare ground, spent whole nights in prayer and meditation, exposed himself to the most severe cold, ate but one meal during the day and then only bread and water, adding but a few herbs on feast-days.

St. Gregory tells us that Basil was not only reduced to the greatest poverty by having disposed of his worldly possessions, but that owing to his severe fasting he resembled a living skeleton. Out of humility he seldom left his solitude, in order to remain unknown to the world, and then only visited the nearest villages to instruct the inhabitants in the truths of Christianity. The greater part of his time was spent in prayer, meditating on the holy writings and in cultivating his field. Basil wrote several times to Gregory begging him to come and join him in his solitude; he proved to him that it was the best way to lead a

truly holy life, and of mortifying the passions. St. Gregory fulfilled the wish of his friend and remained with him for some time; they spent their days in labor, prayer, singing, watching, and in studying together the holy writings.

Gregory in a letter declares that he looked back to that time with a longing spirit. He writes: "Who can carry me back to those former days, when I rejoiced with thee in privations? For voluntary privation is in fact far more glorious than all enjoyments forced upon us. Who will restore to me those songs of praise and night-watches, who that raising of the heart to God in prayer, that heavenly life, when the spirit feels itself almost freed from its earthly fetters, that communion and harmony of the souls of the brethren who were elevated by thee to a God-like life?—who that zealous searching into the holy writings, and the light that we found therein by the guidance of the Spirit?"

Although Basil avoided all intercourse with the world, his solitude was soon intruded upon; Persons came from all parts to listen to his teachings and to follow his example. He therefore established a monastery, and prescribed therein a rule of life after his own manner of living. The fullness of grace had increased in him to such a degree, by his truly holy life, that it could no longer be concealed, and he felt it a duty to go over the whole province and arouse the people to a truly Christian life. Many resolved to renounce the world and to live henceforth only for God. Thus many monasteries sprang up, for whose guidance Basil wrote a special rule, which is followed even at the present day by the monks of the East, and from which the saintly founders of subsequent orders have borrowed the most essential rules for their own communities.

It happened that the emperor Valens came to Cesarea for the purpose of giving up the churches of the city to the Arians. Bishop Eusebius knew of no better auxiliary in this emergency, than St. Gregory of Nazianzen. Eusebius had once before called upon St. Basil for help, but having seen that the people were becoming attached to the holy man, he seems to have become jealous and to have treated Basil in an unbecoming manner. Basil had again assumed his solitary mode of life, in order that he might not be the means of disturbing the peace of the city and of the Bishop; but when the Bishop invited Gregory to come, manifesting thereby the confidence which he placed in him, the latter had a good opportunity offered him, of showing the real meaning of the word "friendship." Writing to Eusebius how much he was grieved by his treatment of Basil, he says: "When you honor me, but despise him, you appear to me like a man who with one hand caresses the face of a person, while with his other hand he gives that same person a blow upon the head; or like one, who undermines the foundation of a house and at the same time paints its rooms or embellishes its exterior." He therefore advised him to become reconciled with Basil, and to send for him, and then Gregory promised to follow Basil as the shadow follows the body. The matter was adjusted, and Basil and Gregory by

their example were in that time of trouble and confusion, when the emperor himself sought to propagate the Arian heresy, like two fortresses erected for the defence of the Catholic Church. Eusebius again placed such confidence in Basil, that he charged him with the most important affairs of the diocese, and Basil proved himself worthy of that confidence; for whenever he found it necessary, he did not hesitate to censure fearlessly the most influential persons of the city, he adjusted law-suits, reconciled enemies, and when Cappadocia was afterwards visited by a great famine, every one looked to Basil for help. He prevailed upon the rich to give to the poor from their abundance; he assembled daily whole crowds and provided them with soup and vegetables; he himself served them, and imitating the example of the Lord, washed their feet, and what was still left him of temporal goods, he distributed among the poor.

After the death of Eusebius, St. Gregory succeeded in having Basil chosen Archbishop of Cesarea, not because he was his most intimate friend, but because he thought him and knew him to be the most worthy person to fill this high office. Basil surpassed all the expectations that had been formed of him; he used all his revenues for charitable purposes, and although a Bishop, he remained so poor, that he was sometimes unable to pay for a messenger or secretary, when he needed one. He preached frequently even on week-days, and yet his hearers were so numerous, that he compared them to the sands of the sea; he was so zealous and successful in his spiritual labors, that the people would come by night to his church and confess their sins, spending the rest of the night in prayer and songs of praise. The people received the Holy Communion in his church on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and on the feasts of the martyrs.

While St. Basil lived most abstemiously, so that even the poorest beggar fared better than he did, he benefited his fellow-men with all the treasures that were at the disposal of his love. He caused a hospital to be built on so grand a scale, that it may be compared to a city—and from whence did he procure the means? From the rich, whose hearts he knew how to move with such power, that they willingly and liberally contributed to the charitable purposes he had in view. He was at the same time the kindest nurse; he embraced and even kissed those suffering from leprosy, a charity, that certainly comforted the hearts of those poor and despised sufferers, more than the richest alms. Frequent too were his visits to the hospital, to bestow the benefits of Christian instruction upon the poor, who are sometimes but indifferently instructed.

The power and Christian enthusiasm of his great soul produced the most beneficial effects upon the clergy of his diocese; they were so distinguished for their virtues that the aged Bishop of another diocese entreated St. Basil to send him one of his priests, who after his death should succeed him in the Episcopacy.

Considering the intimate friendship between the two friends, one would

think that Gregory would have repaired to Cesarea as soon as his friend Basil was installed as Archbishop, but, in spite of the urgent invitations that Basil extended to him, he could scarcely be induced to accept them; and when he finally yielded to the wish of his friend and came to the city, he declined all marks of honor. He acted in this manner so that no one might say that Basil had shown partiality to him.

The life of St. Basil is so rich and illustrious in examples of virtue, that it would require a large book to give a detailed account of them. We are therefore obliged to omit much that would be interesting, and can only relate some instances of his relations to the Emperor Valens. The Emperor adhered to the Arian heresy, that false doctrine which denied the divinity of Christ and declared him to be only an angel. He was so zealous in endeavoring to make the people embrace the Arian doctrine that he visited in person the different provinces of the empire. Basil was the most zealous, and at the same time the most skillful defender of the Catholic faith. The Emperor therefore regarded him as the greatest obstacle to his success, and he came to Cesarea for the express purpose of doing away with this obstacle. In his answers, when summoned before the judge, St. Basil says: "How, and with what will you threaten me? A man who possesses nothing does not fear to be deprived of his possessions; I have nothing but the rags that cover me and a few books. With exile? There can be none for me, for I am everywhere at home, because I consider the whole world as belonging to God. With death? I look upon it as a benefit; it will lead me the sooner to God, for whom I live, for whom I labor, for whose sake I am willing to die, because I will then belong to Him forever."

When the judge remarked that no man had ever yet addressed him with such boldness, Basil replied: "Undoubtedly, because you have never before dealt with a Bishop, otherwise you would have received many such answers. In all other matters we speak modestly, as God has commanded us; but when the cause of religion is in question we think only of God, and are not afraid of fire, sword, wild beasts, or any other kind of torture." He even assured his persecutors that he was sorry he was not able to die more than once for the truth.

They continued in their attempt to terrify Basil by threatening him and displaying before him the engines of their power,—but the result was such, that the judge was obliged to tell the emperor that the firmness of this man could not be shaken. The emperor, who was not insensible to true greatness of soul, had himself to admire this undaunted courage, and he ordered that no force should be used towards St. Basil. The Arians however continued to prejudice the emperor against Basil, so that some time after he resolved to banish the Archbishop again, in order to suppress the Catholic religion with greater ease. The conveyance was ready which was to carry off St. Basil in the night-time, when the only son of the emperor became suddenly ill, and that very night the empress was disturbed by frightful dreams. All the remedies which they applied

produced no effect, and the emperor and the empress regarded the sudden illness of their son as a punishment of God, and humbled themselves before His mighty hand. The emperor recalled the holy man, whom he was on the point of sending into exile, and entreated him to visit his sick child. As soon as Basil entered the room the sick boy felt greatly relieved, and Basil told the parents that he would recover entirely if he should be brought up as a Catholic. The emperor, however, was persuaded by the Arians not to yield, and the child died suddenly. The emperor then intended once more to banish the saintly Bishop, but when he was about to sign the order he broke three pens in succession, and, seizing the fourth, his arm began to tremble so that he tore the paper, desisted from his intention, and left the Archbishop in possession of his church.

So zealously did St. Basil discharge the duties of a Christian pastor, that he is looked upon as one of the most glorious models of a Catholic Bishop. It is therefore so much the more astonishing how he, who was so wonderfully active in caring for the salvation of those entrusted to his care, and who, in spite of ill-health, was so unremitting in preaching the word of God, could nevertheless write so many excellent works. His book on the six days of Creation, his sermons on the Psalms, his five books written against the Arian heresy, his work on the Holy Ghost, his book on Virginity, and several hundred letters are even at the present day highly esteemed in the Catholic Church. His last words before he yielded up his spirit were: "Into Thy hands, O God, I commend my soul!" and the whole city, indeed the whole Christian world, was thrown into mourning when he breathed his last. Many persons were present at his funeral who desired to touch his garments, or to step in his shadow, to place their hands upon the coffin, to approach the bearers, or at least to obtain a look at his face, as they all believed that blessings would follow any mark of veneration paid to him. The public squares, colonnades and the upper stories of the highest houses were filled with men, and the loud mourning and weeping drowned the singing of the chants, so that reason had to yield to the vehemence of grief. Even the Jews and Gentiles vied with the Christians in the manifestations of their reverence and love of the departed saint. With great difficulty the bearers succeeded in placing the body in the vault, for many of the people never ceased in their efforts to obtain, even by force, something that belonged to the saint, so as to preserve it as a relic. The crowd and the pressure was so great that several persons were crushed to death, but they were considered to have been very fortunate in having died with St. Basil.

When St. Gregory received the news of his friend's death he was lying dangerously ill in Seleucia. He wrote to the brother of his deceased friend, St. Gregory of Nyssa, that he felt in this moment as if cut in two, for that half of him had died with his beloved friend; that Basil still visited him in his dreams, and instructed and admonished him when he erred as he was accustomed to do

when still alive. Later, when Gregory came to Cesarea, he pronounced his celebrated panegyric on St. Basil, which is still extant.

ST. DULAS.

(June 15.)

"Pain."

At the time of the persecution of the Christians in Cilicia, Dulas was accused of being a Christian, and brought before the Roman governor Maximus. An old Greek manuscript gives the following account of his trial:

"When Dulas was brought in, the governor said: 'What is your name?' 'Servant of Christ,' replied Dulas. 'Tell me your real name,' said the governor. 'My common name is Tatian Dulas, but in truth I am a servant of God,' answered Dulas. Maximus then asked him where he was born and who were his parents. 'I was born in the village of Pretorias, of a good family,' replied Dulas, 'and I knew Christ from my childhood.' 'If you come of a good family, then obey the invincible rulers, and sacrifice to the gods, so as to obtain not only my regard, but that of the emperor also,' said Maximus. 'Your esteem and that of your rulers you may keep for yourself and for those who have no knowledge of God; but I desire no promotion except in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ,' was the answer made by Dulas.

"The governor then said: 'Stretch him on the rack and beat him in order to bring him to his senses.' 'I thank Thee, O Christ! for having been found worthy to suffer this for Thy sake,' exclaimed Dulas. 'Foolish man! of what use is your Christ to you, since you are now covered with wounds,' said Maximus. 'St. Paul writes, that none will be crowned, without having struggled for the victory,' answered the martyr. 'Then for having been scourged, you expect to be crowned?' asked Maximus. 'How can you be so crazy as to believe in a crucified man?' 'Which is better, to believe in a crucified man, that is in the living true God, or in idols made of stone and wood, works made by the hands of man?' asked Dulas."

After Dulas had shown the governor, that the pagans themselves, by what they told of their gods, proved them to be wicked and helpless, and the pagan religion to be but a mockery, the governor, at a loss for an answer, became very angry, and the Greek manuscript continues thus: "'Then, said Maximus, 'turn him around and scourge him on the belly with briers.' The secretary of the governor said to Dulas: 'Obey the governor, for behold, your entrails are al-

ready protruding.' 'I do not need your advice,' replied Dulas, 'for I have already a counselor in my Lord Jesus Christ. 'Bring in the grate,' said Maximus, 'make it red hot and put the wicked blasphemer upon it.' Yet although they burned the body of Dulas, they did not succeed in making the servant of God deny his faith. Seeing this, Maximus said: 'Lock him up in the innermost part of the prison and do not give him the least assistance.' And the martyr lay fettered with chains in his dungeon and praised God incessantly, that he was thus to finish his earthly career.

"Five days later Maximus sat again in judgment, and inquired if that wicked adherer to the Christian religion was still alive, and if so, commanded that he should be brought into his presence. The secretary replied: 'He is not only alive and firm in his faith, but his body is entirely without scars.' When Dulas was brought before the governor, and the latter saw him perfectly recovered and his face full of serenity, he said: 'You disobedient guards, did I not forbid you to lend him any assistance?' And they said: 'We assure you, that he was closely watched and heavily chained in his dungeon; how he recovered none of us can say.' Dulas then said: 'Unreasonable man, Jesus Christ has healed me and prepared my body again to bear thy torments, that thou mayest recognize our God as the good physician who miraculously heals those who hope in Him, and that I may obtain a twofold crown of martyrdom. 'Pour oil on his head and put burning coals thereon,' was the order given by Maximus, and as Dulas wavered not, he commanded that the martyr's nose should be filled with mustard, his back torn with sharp hooks, and vinegar poured into the wounds. While the order of the governor was being executed, the saintly sufferer continually confessed Christ and spoke with contempt of the idols; upon hearing which, Maximus said: 'Crush his jaw-bones with stones, so that he can no longer blaspheme the gods and have no power to utter another word.' 'My God is the true God,' exclaimed Dulas, 'it was His will to become man, and after He had been crucified and buried, He rose on the third day from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father and will come again to judge the world with fire.' 'Foolish man,' said Maximus, 'see you have acknowledged your belief in two gods.' 'You are mistaken,' replied Dulas, 'I believe in the triune God.' 'Then you have three gods?' said Maximus. 'I confess and worship a triune God; I believe in a Father, I confess a Son, and I worship the Holy Ghost.' 'Explain to me, how you believe in but one God and at the same time confess three?' asked Maximus. 'A sensual man comprehends not what is of the spirit,' replied Dulas; 'yet on account of those present I will say this, as thou as man art endowed with the power of speech, so also has God the Almighty Father His Word (logos) equal to Him, and His Holy Spirit. God in the beginning created man and made him after his likeness; He breathed into him the spirit of life and placed him in paradise; but Satan prevailed upon man to transgress the commands of God; yet God wished to raise up and to comfort again His fallen

creatures, and to lead the erring back upon the right path, and for that purpose He sent His Son, His Word, and the Word of God dwelt in the Holy Virgin and was born of her, through whom also the Father hath saved the world.' 'Then the Word is able to beget a man?' said Maximus. 'Thou comprehendest not the divine mystery,' answered Dulas; 'for if thou wouldst know the power of God, thou wouldst recognize that He who made man out of clay, who founded the earth upon the waters, who vaulted the sky, who created all nature, is Christ; for as man is not able to behold God, out of infinite charity He has become man Himself, in order that, as through the first created man death has come into the world, resurrection also should come through a man, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' 'Then the dead will rise again?' said Maximus. 'Yes,' replied Dulas, 'there is a resurrection, for how else could God judge the world?' 'Use not fallacious arguments,' said Maximus; 'when we are dead, we remain dead forever.' 'Thou speakest the truth, when thou sayest, that thou art dead; for as thou believest in dead idols, thou wilt not rise to the resurrection of life, but to eternal disgrace and punishment; for every man has to appear before the tribunal of Christ and to account for what he has done.' Chain him and guard him in his dungeon,' was the next order given by Maximus.

"The following day, when the servant of God had again been brought into the presence of the governor, the latter said: 'Of what use, wretch, has it been for thee to sin against our idols?' 'It is no small gain with God to reject thy idols,' answered Dulas, 'but Christ will punish thee still during the term of thy life.' 'Force him to eat flesh and to drink wine of the victims offered to the gods,' said the governor. 'Although thou force thy whole abominable altar into my mouth, thou canst not injure the servant of Christ,' replied Dulas. 'Hang him on a beam,' commanded the governor, 'tear his flesh with scourges until his entrails fall out, and then strip the skin off his face.' 'Madman that thou art, dost thou not see that Satan, thy father, instigates thee to give that order,' said Dulas. The order of Maximus was executed, and with his entrails hanging out and the flesh of his cheeks torn from the bones, Dulas was brought back to his dungeon. And as the governor then intended to return to Tarsus, he ordered the prisoners to be carried after him, and when they had reached the twentieth mile-stone St. Dulas made the sign of the cross and expired. The retinue of the governor was still fourteen leagues distant from Tarsus, and the keeper of the prisoners, when informing the governor of Dulas's death, said: 'Dulas, the blasphemer of the gods, is dead; what shall we do with him?' 'Throw him in the ravine,' said Maximus, 'for he is not worthy of being buried.' And they threw him into the bed of a brook that empties into the Zephyrius.

"The dogs of the shepherds soon scented the body of the saint, and one of them guarded the venerable remains so that no bird of prey could approach, and another seized the cloak of a shepherd with his teeth and dragged it over the

body. The fact became known, and the people came and took possession of the mortal remains of St. Dulas, and praised God that they had not been deprived of them, but that he had returned from whence he had gone forth. The body was then buried in a worthy manner, and the assembled Christians praised our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

You see here a man, dear reader, who for his fidelity to Christ suffered dreadful torments. While God for the glorification of His power suddenly healed the wounds of St. Dulas, the latter had twice to undergo martyrdom. Yet thereby his merit was only so much the greater, for all the pains of the martyr were a precious proof of his faith and love to God. There are also very, very many persons who in a natural manner have to suffer various pains, often as great as those of the martyrs : many suffer beyond description from tooth-ache, others are tortured by attacks of gout and feel as if their limbs were pierced with knives ; those who are attacked with the cholera feel as though their entrails were filled with burning coals, and many thousands of young and healthy people suffer most painfully and cruelly from mutilation and wounds caused by the calamities of war. Yet, as not a sparrow falls to the ground without the knowledge and will of God, you will perhaps ask why does God permit poor men to suffer so much pain ?

Our answer is, that pain is a consequence of the first fall of man, and therefore pain makes the child cry when coming into the world, and pain assails man when leaving the world. Pain, then, is an atonement that God requires of man for his sins ; the more patiently the sinner accepts and bears it as a merited punishment, the less he has to atone for after death. Pain is frequently a knife in the hand of God, wherewith he cuts off the iniquity of a sinner like a bad ulcer, and thus cures of frivolity, haughtiness and wantonness. Pain also, like the sound of a church-bell, reminds man of God and admonishes him to pray, and when in consequence of his prayer, pain has left him, it induces him to offer thanks to his divine consoler. When man is truly pious and virtuous, like the Saints, then every pain, borne with Christian patience, heightens and increases his merits ; it is regarded as a good work in the eyes of God. Finally pain shall give man a disgust for this world and a longing for a better one, the ground of which is not, as here below, entirely strewn and covered with thorns.

ST. LUGARDIS.

(June 16.)

"Virtue of Prayer."

ONCE when traveling in Tyrol with some gentlemen, we met a carriage full of nuns. One of the gentlemen then began to talk of the idleness of monastic life; he said, that he had a high regard for the Sisters of Charity, as they were useful to the world; but religious orders, spending most of their time in prayer, ought to be done away with. This worldly-minded man knew not, indeed, as many thousands do, that praying is also a labor, and a labor that produces great effects upon body and soul in this and the other world, and that consequently men and women, who are truly religious, belong to the most useful working-people on earth. This truth is especially proved and illustrated in the life of Lugardis, whose feast the Catholic Church celebrates to-day.

Lugardis, who lived about 600 years ago, in the Cistercian Convent of Aquiria near Brussels, in Belgium, had to undergo many a struggle before she found herself on the true path upon which the Lord intended to lead her to Himself. First she wished to marry, and had thus to struggle with her own inclination, and when she had determined upon devoting herself entirely to God, she was tempted by honest and dishonest means to abandon her resolution of remaining a virgin. Assisted by the divine grace she succeeded, however, in gaining in the convent deliverance from all such temptations. As a nun she attained a high degree of perfection, so that she was blessed with heavenly revelations and visions, of which latter, however, we do not intend to speak, since we only propose to show how much she effected by her prayer.

A priest had an undue affection for a pious patient, so that instead of discharging his spiritual duties, he spent most of his time in the society of that person and neglected thereby his clerical duties. St. Lugardis perceived that thus his heart was chained by Satan, and she therefore prayed incessantly for him. Her prayers, however, seemed fruitless, so that she commenced to despair of being heard; but God said to her: "The man for whom thou prayest, resists and will not be converted." Then Lugardis continued praying that God might lead him back upon the right path in spite of his resistance; and behold, the priest was at once freed from his blindness, so that he recognized the great danger in which he had been placed, and thanked God and His intercessor Lugardis for his deliverance.

A Cistercian Abbot, named Simon, was distinguished for his great zeal, but he was at the same time pitiless and severe towards those under his care. He died suddenly. Lugardis, whom he had greatly revered, was much grieved

thereat and sought to benefit his soul by fasting and praying. She implored the Lord to bestow upon the deceased whatever comfort was designed for her. At last the Abbot appeared to her in a beautiful form and told her that but for her prayers, he would have had to suffer in purgatory for forty years.

The heart of Lugardis was full of longing for the other world, and on that account, her daily prayers to the Lord were never said without tears. The Lord once appeared to her, and pointing to his wounds, said: "Look, how my wounds call to thee, that I may not have given my blood and suffered death in vain." Lugardis, astonished and terrified, asked what was meant by the calling of the wounds of Christ, and she received the answer: "Through thy prayers and exercises thou wilt appease the anger of the Father, so that he will not condemn sinners to death, but they will be converted and saved through the mercy of God." And again Lugardis had a similar vision. She saw the Saviour standing, with His wounds opened anew, in the presence of the Father, and entreating Him in behalf of the sinners. Then He turned to Lugardis and said: "Dost thou see how entirely I sacrifice myself to the Father for the sinners? Thus it is my will that thou shalt entirely sacrifice thyself to me for sinners, and avert the punishment prepared for them."

A lady of rank had retired into the convent after having given her estates to her sons. In consequence of the weakness of old age, she became deaf. One day the nuns commenced to sing the solemn vespers, and one of them made a sign to her; but she being thereby reminded of her deafness, began to weep. Lugardis went to her and asked her the cause of her tears. The deaf lady said: "Why should I not weep in my affliction, being so deaf, that I cannot even hear the solemn hymns in honor of God." Lugardis, touched in her heart, commenced to pray, then rose, wetted two of her fingers with spittle and placed them upon the ears of the deaf nun, who suddenly felt the obstacle removed from her ears, and she was immediately cured of her deafness.

A rich and noble officer had a daughter in the convent of Acquiria. Knowing that her father was given to many vices, she persuaded him to ask the pious Lugardis to pray for him. The holy nun consented and began to implore the Lord in his behalf. The officer soon after was reduced to such poverty, that he had sometimes to suffer great want, yet he bore his misfortune with so much patience, that the effect of Lugardis's prayer could be clearly seen. He reformed thoroughly, so that he finally joined a strict religious order, and as a monk led a most exemplary life.

A young nun was so violently tempted, that she was near falling into despair. She applied to St. Lugardis for her powerful intercession. Some time after she had began to pray for her, Lugardis comforted the poor sister, saying that Good-Friday would bring her relief, at the moment when the priest raised up the cross with the words: "Ecce signum crucis," that is, "behold the wood of the cross." And so it happened, at the time of the adoration

of the cross the young nun was freed from all her temptations and filled with divine comfort.

The Duchess of Brabant, a daughter of king Philip of France, had fallen dangerously ill; she had always greatly esteemed and loved St. Lugardis, and she now sent to ask her prayers. Lugardis complied, informing the princess that she would not recover, and that she should therefore make her confession, prepare for death, and then await the Lord in full confidence. The Duchess died soon after, and Lugardis knew by a vision that the deceased had obtained something much better than bodily health, and that she had entered into the abode of everlasting bliss.

A worldly acquaintance of St. Lugardis had committed a grievous sin. He confessed it, but still his soul was greatly troubled, and he was near falling into despair. In the anguish of his heart he went to the saintly Lugardis, as a child would go to his mother, and told her what he had done, and how he was tormented by his conscience. She prayed several times for the sinner, but the Lord answered her not as He usually did; the sinner remained comfortless. Finally she prayed as Moses had once done for his people: "Either efface me from the book of life, or forgive him his sins." And the Lord inclined then to mercy, and the sinner was blessed with the hope of perfect forgiveness, and he obtained even greater quiet and peace than he had enjoyed before he had sinned against God.

We could relate many other instances of the beneficial effect produced by the prayer of St. Lugardis, but we think that we have already sufficiently shown the virtue of her prayers and her spiritual labors for the welfare of her fellowmen. Eleven years before her death she became blind; God, we may say, placed thus a curtain between the world and her soul, so that undisturbed by worldly sights, she might be enabled to direct her whole spirit to heaven. One year before her death she had a vision, in which Christ said to her: "The end of thy labor is soon approaching; thou shalt not be much longer separated from me. Only three things I ask of thee this year: first, that thou shalt offer up thanks for blessings already received; secondly, that thou shalt sacrifice in prayer thy whole being to my Father for the sake of sinners; and thirdly that renouncing every other care, thy only desire shall be to come to me."

We frequently hear people say in reference to persons who are old and poor, or afflicted with a lingering disease, that it would be better if God would call them to Himself, for they are no longer of any use here below; and the aged and the infirm, either out of an humble sense of their own wretchedness or out of weakness, sometimes think and express themselves in like manner. And yet there is, perhaps, no one in the house who is so useful, prevents so much misfortune and causes so many blessings to descend upon the family, as these despised old people, for the reason that they can apply themselves more to prayer than those always occupied in toiling and working. Therefore never disdain a

child, an infirm member of your family, or a grandfather or grandmother, who have become weak from old age, and whom, perhaps, you may be obliged to support. Remember that prosperity and success, health and bodily strength, the welfare of your own soul, depend not on any effort that you may make, but on God; know that God's assistance is best gained by prayer, and that a truly pious person obtains greater success and is more pleasing to God, than the most careful plowing, sowing, threshing, or bargaining on your part.

SS. NICANDER AND MARCIAN.

(June 17.)

"Conjugal Love."

NICANDER AND MARCIAN served in the Roman army during the reign of the emperor Diocletian, and as they were accused of being Christians, they were brought before the Roman governor Maximus. The Acts still extant give the following account of their trial and martyrdom:

"'Nicander and Marcian,' said Maximus, 'do you not know the decrees of our rulers, according to which you must forthwith sacrifice to the gods? Step forth therefore, and sacrifice.' 'Those who choose to do so,' answered Nicander, 'thou mayest command to sacrifice; but we are Christians and cannot comply with such a command.' 'Why do you not also regard the promised gold?' asked Maximus. 'Because the gold of the wicked is a burden to those who wish to serve God,' answered Nicander. 'Sacrifice to the gods,' again said Maximus. 'How can a Christian worship stone and wood?' replied Nicander, 'since there is an immortal God and Creator of all things, whom I serve, and who has saved me and all who believe in Him?'

"Daria, the wife of St. Nicander, encouraged and praised the martyr, saying: 'Offer no incense, deny not Christ: look up to heaven and to Him to whom thou art faithful, for He is thy helper.' 'Wicked wife, that thou art,' said the governor, 'why wilt thou be the cause of the death of thy husband!' 'In order that he may live with God and not be condemned forever,' answered Daria. 'No, that is not the reason,' said Maximus; 'but it is because thou wouldst like to marry another man, therefore thou wishest to be rid of Nicander.' 'If thou hast such a suspicion, then kill me for Christ's sake, even before my husband, if thou art ordered also to force women to sacrifice,' replied Daria. 'I have no such order, and I shall not do as thou desirest, but I shall imprison thee,' said Maximus.

"After she had been led away, the governor turned again to Nicander, saying: 'Heed not the words of thy wife, nor of any other person, and be not deprived of life; I am willing to grant thee three days' respite, that thou mayest consider if it is better to live or to die.' 'I do not wish this respite, for I am already resolved to be saved,' answered Nicander. Then the governor said in a loud voice: 'Thanks be to God!' And Nicander said likewise: 'Yes, thanks be to God!' But whereas the governor thought that the martyr had spoken of saving his earthly life, and was ready to yield, Nicander full of the Holy Ghost began to praise the Lord, and to implore God with a loud voice that he might save him from this temptation and preserve him in His grace. When the governor had heard this, he said: 'How, hast thou changed thy mind again, and wilt thou now die instead of preserving thy life?' 'I said, that I wished to live the life everlasting,' replied Nicander, 'not the perishable life of this world; therefore I gave my body into thy power; do then as thou pleasest, for I am a Christian.' The governor turned then to Marcian and said: 'What sayest thou, Marcian?' He replied: 'The same that my friend Nicander has said.' Then you will be cast together into prison, and suffer the punishment you deserve,' was the answer made by Maximus.

"Twenty days elapsed since their imprisonment, when they were again called before the governor. He said: 'You have had time enough given you, Nicander and Marcian, to make you resolve to obey the imperial decree.' 'Your persuasions will neither make us waver in our faith, nor induce us to deny God,' replied Marcian; 'for we look to Him for assistance, and we know whither He calls us. Make no further delay, but send us soon where we shall see the crucified Saviour whom you blaspheme, but whom we worship.' St. Nicander expressed himself in a similar manner: 'Put us to death immediately, believe not that we fear thy tortures, but we are in haste to receive our reward according to our faith.' 'You do not resist me, and I do not persecute you, but by order of the emperor,' said Maximus; 'therefore I am clear and innocent of your blood. If you think that you do right, then I congratulate you, and your wish shall be fulfilled.' Having spoken thus he ordered them to be beheaded. The saintly martyrs said as with one voice: 'Peace be with thee, good governor,' and they withdrew rejoicing and praising God.

"St. Nicander was followed by his wife and a friend of his, who carried the martyr's child in his arms, and St. Marcian by his relatives and his wife, who lamented and reproached him, saying: 'Was this thy meaning, when thou didst tell me in prison: Fear nothing, weep not on my account? Have pity on thy wife, look at thy dear child, return to us and despise us not; why dost thou hate us?' And she seized him by his cloak and pulled him back. Marcian looked at her, and said: 'Art thou entirely in the power of Satan? Leave me, or else permit me to suffer martyrdom for God.' Zoticus, a Christian, held back Marcian's wife and said: 'Cheer up, brother, thou hast fought a good fight,

truly thou art happy as a perfect Christian.' As his wife continued her lamentations and tried to hold him back, and laid the child at his feet, Marcian said: 'Go, in the name of the Lord, for thou canst not endure to see thy husband tortured; thou wouldst lose thy senses,'—and he raised and kissed his child and looked up to heaven, saying: 'Lord God Almighty, care for this, my child!' Then the martyrs embraced and gave each other the kiss of peace, whereupon they were separated to be beheaded.

The wife of Nicander could scarcely press through the crowd, to speak once more with her husband. When she at last had succeeded in drawing near, Nicander greeted her with the words: 'God be with thee, my sister.' And Daria said: 'Be brave, my most beloved, and show thyself a man. I have lived for ten years without thee (Nicander having been absent with the army) and have longed day and night to see thee once more and then to die; now I have seen thee and rejoice in knowing that thou art entering life everlasting. I shall think myself highly honored and happy in being the wife of a martyr. Take heart, yield up to God thy blood and thy life, that thou mayest also obtain for me life everlasting.' Nicander once more took his child in his arms, kissed and blessed it, and then gave it back to its mother. The executioner then blindfolded the two happy men, and beheaded them."

This is the literal account as handed down by the Acts.

We often hear a man say: "If I had no family, I would not be afraid of death," and it is generally believed that an unmarried soldier goes with more courage into battle, than the one who has a family at home. Nicander and Marcian were not only soldiers, but Christian heroes, who sacrificed blood and life for their faith, a sacrifice so much the greater, because each of them had to leave a family; but while both martyrs manifested one and the same character, their wives differed. Both indeed loved their husbands; but whereas Daria out of love encouraged her beloved to sacrifice his life for his faith, the wife of Marcian wished and actually endeavored almost by force, to induce her husband to deny his faith for the sake of preserving his life. It is with conjugal love as with man himself. If a wife is a true Christian, then is her love for her husband also Christian; she does not in her heart love her husband more than God, but she loves God ABOVE ALL; the welfare of her husband's soul is to her of the greatest importance, and she cares for it more than for his body or his life. The worldly-minded wife has also very frequently a great love for her husband; she may, perhaps, love him passionately, but her love partakes of a species of idolatry; her husband is the god in whom she believes, in whom she hopes, and whom she loves more than she does the true God; and if her love urges her to care for her husband, then her whole mind is directed towards caring for his body, thinking but little, if at all, of his immortal soul. If her husband is dangerously sick, she does all in her power to nurse him well and to procure for him the best physician and remedies, but does not think it proper to have the

holy sacraments administered to him, for fear of alarming him. And if, nevertheless, her husband dies, then her grief breaks out into blasphemies: she has, perhaps, a magnificent tomb erected over his remains and adorns his grave with chaplets of flowers, but she has not the least thought that his soul might, perhaps, be benefited by prayer and other Christian works. Therefore a man who marries a worldly-minded woman only increases his own sensuality and pride of life; but he who chooses a Christian woman adds a conscience to his own, and his wife is to him a guardian-angel of his soul.

We find in some old missals a special celebration and mass in memory of the two martyrs, in which also Daria, the wife of Nicander is mentioned; she deserved this high honor in consequence of her Christian feelings and sentiment. The wife of Marcian, however, has fallen into oblivion, so that even her name has been forgotten. Parts of this mass read thus:

INTROIT OF THE MASS.

"Let us rejoice in the Lord, as we celebrate this feast in honor of the saintly martyrs Nicander, Marcian and Daria, at whose martyrdom the Angels rejoice and praise the Son of God. Alleluia. Exult, ye righteous, in the Lord, for glory belongs to the just. Honor and glory be to God the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

PRAYER.

Grant us, we pray, Almighty God, through the intercession of Thy holy martyrs Nicander, Marcian and Daria, that firm in faith we may despise the joys of the world and fear not its troubles. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

MARIA DOLOROSA.

(June 18.)

"False Accusations."

MORE than five hundred years ago there lived in a village belonging to the Duchy of Brabant an honest married couple, who were blessed with an only daughter named Mary. The maiden was very pious and asked to renounce the world and to devote her life entirely to the service of God. Her parents not only gave their consent, but encouraged her to serve God and the Blessed Virgin in purity and fidelity. Mary went to a church consecrated to the Blessed

Virgin, and there made before her image the vow of chastity, and declared her willingness to die rather than to break her promise; she renounced also all claim to her father's property and took the vow of poverty.

It so happened, that a certain man entertained a passionate love for the maiden, for she was very beautiful and charming, and instigated by his passions he made her sinful offers of love. Mary was greatly dismayed by his proposals and rejected them with horror, saying that she would never yield to his wishes, and break the vow she had made to God and His holy Mother. He nevertheless continued to persecute the pious virgin, and the devil inflamed more and more his wicked passion in order to plunge him deeper into the abyss of vice and to mislead Mary if possible from the path of virtue. When the man saw that he could not induce the maiden to comply with his unchaste desires, he determined to work upon her fears. He therefore concealed himself in the house where Mary usually worked, stole a silver cup, and hid it in a sack belonging to her. The people of the house soon missed the cup, and searched the whole house in vain for it; the wicked man now went to Mary, accused her of the theft, but told her that he was willing to conceal the deed from the people, if she would yield to his wishes.

Terrified at this false imputation, Mary denied having committed the crime; but he insisted upon the truth of his assertion, telling her that he would himself accuse and convict her of the theft before the magistrate. Mary said to him: "It would be a frightful wrong to accuse an innocent woman of a capital crime, for I am entirely guiltless of the theft." The man then seized her sack and taking out the cup, said: "See, you are now convicted by ocular proof; do what I ask of you, and I will not accuse you but will save you from death." Although overcome with grief, Mary answered firmly: "I shall never comply with your demands; I shall preserve my chastity, and rather sacrifice my life then yield to your wicked lust."

When the bad man perceived that he could neither persuade her by flatteries nor by threats, he went to the judge, produced the silver cup and declared that a certain Mary had stolen it, in whose sack he himself had found it. He accused her also of being a witch, who had cast a spell upon him, so that he could neither eat, nor drink, nor rest. Very many people at that time believed in witches and sorcery, and it was regarded as a crime punishable with death, and numberless persons, who were suspected to be such, were put to the rack and executed.

The judge at first would not believe the accuser, for he had never heard any thing wrong of the maiden; but when the cup was produced, he was misled into pronouncing an unjust sentence. Mary meanwhile had gone to her parents and told them of her distress, determined, however, rather to lose her life than her purity. The parents comforted her by telling her that God and the most Blessed Virgin would protect her; but while they were encouraging her, the

judge approached with the accuser, to take Mary off to prison. Her parents endeavored in vain to justify their daughter,—the maiden was imprisoned as a criminal. Mary acknowledged during her trial the fact that the cup was found in her sack, but she said that some one must have put it there without her knowledge. The accuser represented to the judge, that by acknowledging that fact she had indeed confessed the crime, and that she only desired to implicate some one else. According to the severity of the penal law then in use, the guiltless maiden was therefore sentenced to death. When led to the place of execution, Mary was obliged to pass by the church dedicated to the Mother of God, and she entreated the judge to grant her leave to pray once more before the image of the Blessed Virgin. Having obtained his permission, she entered and knelt down and implored the Mother of God, as the comforter of the afflicted, to assist her in her anguish and need; she prayed then for all who were the cause of her unjust death, offered up her own bitter grief, that all, who should ever come to the church in distress, might obtain relief and assistance, and finally implored for herself the grace of a happy death and be received by the Queen of Virgins into life everlasting.

After Mary had ended her prayer, she arose and was handed over to the executioner, to be fettered, blindfolded and buried alive. He dug a grave and placed the maiden in it, but knowing her to be innocent and pious, he entreated her to intercede for him when in the presence of God. Mary replied: "Friend, I implore God to forgive you for what you are about to do, and to forgive all your sins; I heartily forgive all who have offended me by word or deed, and I will pray to the Almighty God, that He may forgive them, and may grant that those who come to this place, mindful of my suffering, may never leave it without spiritual comfort." Meanwhile a pointed stake had been prepared to drive through the body of the virgin, as was customary at that time. Her false accuser stood by and witnessed all the proceedings; but while he saw that all present wept for grief at the death of the innocent maiden, his heart remained untouched, for it was completely under the control of Satan. The lovely virgin was then covered with earth, and three men with large hammers drove the stake into the grave through her body, so that their blows could be heard for a great distance.

You shrink, perhaps, dear reader, at the dreadful wrong and cruel death that the guiltless Mary had to suffer, and yet what happened to her, has happened also to many thousands, who by false accusations have lost their peace of mind, their honor, their property or their lives. God in His wisdom did not see fit to interfere, either to punish them on account of other sins which they had committed, or to give them the opportunity of acquiring through patience and love of their enemies, a rich reward in the other world. How is it with you in this regard? You too, perhaps, have been falsely accused, and regarding it as insupportable, have, perhaps, sinned against God by murmuring or doubt-

ing His justice and by becoming enraged and manifesting a desire to revenge yourself upon your enemy; but by doing so, you have only increased the burden of your distress; for you have committed a great sin. Therefore if you are ever again falsely accused, say to yourself: "People consider me in regard to many things as better than I really am, for they know not how sinful I am; therefore it matters not, if in respect to other things they think me worse than I actually am. Is it not a thousand times better to appear at the last judgment, when every thing will come to light, more virtuous than the world has thought me, than to appear worse? If I have been innocently defamed, then in fact I pass the last judgment already by anticipation." The life of this innocent and unjustly executed virgin relates also, how God glorified her after death; it says: "Before the accuser withdrew from the place of execution, he was possessed by the devil. In the night he began to rage and shout, so that all who heard him were terrified. He was chained, but the strongest fetters scarcely sufficed to restrain him. At last they were obliged to place him in a cage, and they had to use force to induce him to take some nourishment. He remained in that condition for seven years, during which time his relatives made several pilgrimages with him, but in vain—he remained a demoniac. Finally they resolved to carry him to the grave of Mary Dolorosa. He was put in a wagon, but the wicked spirit made him so heavy, that his friends succeeded only by the greatest efforts in setting the vehicle in motion. When they had reached the place, they intended to lead him into the chapel, but the combined strength and efforts of his companions were not sufficient to bring him into the house of God. Then the bell was rung for the purpose of assembling those who lived near the chapel, and when by their assistance he had been brought to the altar of the Mother of God, and all who were present had begun praying for him, the devil left him with a great noise, and without human assistance the chains fell from his hands and legs, broken into pieces, as if they had been made of glass. He rose up entirely cured, knelt down, thanked God, His glorious Mother, and Mary Dolorosa for his deliverance from the power of Satan, and confessed in the presence of all, his terrible crime of having falsely accused the innocent virgin, because she had refused to yield to his wicked lust. All who witnessed and heard this, praised God, who glorifies His faithful children and punishes His enemies even in this world. Henceforward the spot was visited by the people in memory of Mary Dolorosa with still greater confidence and devotion, and the man, no longer possessed, henceforth revered Mary, whose death he had caused."

In concluding this account we must not omit to state, that thirteen extremely beautiful maidens were seen descending from heaven in a bright cloud, all clad in radiant white garments and carrying tapers. She who preceded the rest, seemed to hold the first rank, because her head was adorned with a dazzling crown. They went in procession, three times around the grave of the virgin, and thus, as it were, performed her obsequies. They indicated that the

deceased had been found worthy of a triple crown, on account of her voluntary poverty, chastity and martyrdom. Of the first, the Lord says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" of the second: "Blessed are they who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake;" and of the third: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake." And when the maidens had gone three times around the grave, they were no more seen, but their miraculous appearance had designated this virgin and her place of rest as worthy of veneration.

SS. GERVASE AND PROTASE.

(June 19.)

"Relics."

At the time when St. Ambrose was Archbishop of Milan, the empress Justina was at the head of the Roman empire. She was a zealous adherent of the Arian heresy and therefore endeavored to remove from Milan St. Ambrose, who was then one of the strongest pillars of the Catholic religion. God, however, in a remarkable manner came to the assistance of the Catholics in order to strengthen them in their faith and to encourage them in their firm adherence to their saintly Bishop.

St. Ambrose intended to dedicate a new church, but he was without any relics, and as in our days, so also in the olden times it was customary to place in every Catholic church some relics of Saints. While in this difficulty, the holy Bishop had a vision, in which he saw the grave of the two martyrs Gervase and Protase—the first who died for the faith in Milan; though very little was known of them, except that they had died as martyrs. Ambrose had the ground opened at the place designated, and the bones of two large men were found, whose heads had been cut off; traces of blood were also discovered in the grave.

"God," says St. Augustine, "had kept concealed and preserved the bodies of these martyrs in order to bring them to light in time of need, and therefore it was also His will, to show most clearly to the world that they were the bones of His Saints. Knowing by experience, that wicked spirits could not resist genuine relics, the faithful led possessed persons to these bones, and one of them was seen to throw himself upon the grave before the exorcisms had even been commenced." The relics were then placed upon a litter, and as it was late in the day, solemnly removed to a neighboring church, where they remained

exhibited for two days. The number of people who visited them was immense, and even during the night the church was filled with persons manifesting their veneration.

As the discovery of these holy relics was regarded as a gift from heaven, designed for the dedication of the new church, they were on the third day carried thither in solemn procession amid loud rejoicings of the Catholics. A butcher, named Severus, who had been blind for some time, as the whole city well knew, desired his friends to lead him to a place where the procession was to pass. At the approach of the relics, full of confidence and faith, he touched the cloth wherewith the litter was covered, and he was immediately cured of his blindness. St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, who were both at that time in Milan, witnessed the miracle and mention it in their writings. The joy and gratitude of Severus were so great, that he made a vow to serve during his whole life in the church where the relics of the two martyrs were entombed, and he kept his vow. In consequence of this remarkable event many other afflicted persons were filled with similar confidence in the miraculous power of the relics, and touching them, the sick were cured of their afflictions, and those that were possessed, freed from the evil spirit.

The Arians saw clearly that these miracles proved the truth of the Catholic faith and the falsity of their own; but it is characteristic of heretics to be blind to well-established truth, and to persist in their hardness of heart. They therefore denied the miracles, and asserted that Ambrose had bribed people to feign blindness, sickness and demoniacal possession. It so happened, however, that an Arian became possessed, and began to cry out, that all who spoke against the Holy Trinity (like Arius) would suffer the same torments as he did; and the Arians, in their obduracy, are said to have drowned the possessed man, in order to remove this proof against their false doctrine. Although these miracles did not induce the empress to embrace the true faith, they made such an impression on her, that she no longer dared to persecute the Catholic Church, as she had done before, and the Catholics again enjoyed comparative peace.

As the relics of SS. Gervase and Protase were entombed in the new church on the 19th of June, the Catholic Church celebrates this day in their memory. Several churches in France, Italy, and other countries obtained relics of these Saints for the veneration of the faithful; even the blood-stained ground of their grave was collected and presented to other sanctuaries. Churches were also built in honor of these Saints, in several cities, as in Rome and Paris.

What we know with certainty of these two Saints, is not much more than their names and the fact of their martyrdom; and yet through the miracles which occurred by the discovery of their relics, God Himself has made known to the world, how beloved and honored they are in His eyes. The Vesper-hymn of this day, which we find in the old Milan Breviary, and of which St. Ambrose is probably the author, says justly:

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"I praise Thee, Jesus, giver of new gifts, with new thanks, because the martyrs Gervase and Protase have been found. The pious victims lay concealed, but the holy source was not concealed.

"The blood which calls to God the Father, cannot remain hidden; the grace descending from heaven, has revealed the holy limbs.

"We are not ourselves martyrs, but we have found those who have suffered martyrdom.

"Who would wish for the testimony of man, when the fact warrants the truth?

"The possessed who have been cured, testify to the work of the martyrs; and the blind, by having their eye-sight restored, prove the merit of their holy death.

"Severus the man, now serving in the church, where the Lord is worshiped; as he touched the pall of the martyrs, felt the veil drop from his countenance.

"The light strikes his eye and the night of blindness is forever banished.

"A multitude of faithful rescued from the bonds, freed from the rage of devils —have come from many cities, and have returned blessed to their homes.

"We witnessed the return of the days of yore, the blind restored to sight, and the sick miraculously cured by touching the bodies, or by walking in the shadows of the Saints. Glory to Thee, O Lord!"

The spiritual and physical organization of man forms a complete whole; body and soul belong together, and but for the existence of sin, there would be no separation of body and soul by death, a separation, however, which will only last until the day of resurrection, when both will be again united forever. It is therefore quite natural, that we should respect and honor the physical part, that is, the body of dearly beloved and highly esteemed persons, who have gone to a better world. The pagans sometimes burned the bodies of their deceased relatives and friends, and preserved their ashes in funeral urns; in our days it is a common custom to preserve some of the hair of the departed, who have been dear to us, and we know that the hearts of deceased kings and princes are not unfrequently embalmed and carefully preserved in silver cases. The Christian Church also honors the body, although the soul has been separated from it; she therefore blesses the body of the dead, prays over it, and even consecrates the place which is to receive it. If, however, a person has lived a holy life on earth, then the mortal remains are of great significance. Such a body, sanctified by a godly life, is grown together with the body of Christ by many worthy communions, and it is the mysteriously prepared seed, which at the resurrection becomes a glorious garment in heaven for the soul. The body of a deceased Saint is like a consecrated church, standing unoccupied for a short time, but in which divine service has been and will again be performed—and for this reason Christianity from the very beginning, has always respected and

revered the relics of martyrs. Thus many cities looked upon it as a great honor to possess relics of Saints; when relics were removed from the cemetery to a church, the Christian people met them in procession; altars were erected over the graves of martyrs, and masses offered up thereon; for their bones were regarded as members of Christ, and it is still the custom of the Church to place relics under the stone in the middle of the altar, upon which the most holy sacrifice is offered. St. Ambrose wrote a letter to his sister concerning the discovery of the relics of SS. Gervase and Protase, telling her that he had enshrined them under the altar of the church which was to be dedicated. He says: "The victorious victims shall be laid in the place where Christ is the host. (Pure sacrifice.) HE, who has suffered for all, is UPON the altar—THEY, who were redeemed through his sufferings, are UNDER the altar." That the veneration of the relics of His Saints is indeed pleasing to God, has been proved by Him in a manner that cannot be mistaken; for as by touching the relics of the saintly brothers Gervase and Protase many miraculous cures were effected, so has it also been in regard to the relics of other saints.

The Catholic Church, the "pillar and base of truth" has not only always revered the relics of the Saints, but in the last General Council of Trent declared, that "the Bishops and all who are entrusted with the office of teaching or with the care of souls shall, according to the usage of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, adopted at the beginning of Christianity, and according to the consent of the Holy Fathers and the decrees of the Holy Councils, most carefully instruct the faithful regarding the intercession and invocation of the Saints, the veneration of the relics and the proper use of images, and shall teach them to venerate the bodies of the holy martyrs, who were living members of the body of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost, and who will hereafter be awakened and glorified by Him in the world to come. Through them many benefits are bestowed upon man by God, so that those who assert that no honor and veneration are due to the relics of the Saints, or that these and other holy monuments are uselessly revered by the faithful, and that the tombs of the Saints are visited in vain for the sake of obtaining help, are entirely to be rejected, as the Church has already rejected them, and now rejects them again."

ST. ALBAN.

(June 20.)

"Reformation."

In the life of this Saint we sought for a Christian truth, that had not yet been treated upon in our work; but we found none; our search seemed to be fruitless, and we abandoned our intention for the moment. Afterwards, however, when reading in a certain book, as was our custom every night, we met with the following passage: "A similar love animated the Indian who with several others of his countrymen, accompanied the missionary Anthony Ruiz to the forest of Paraguay. The barbarians suddenly attacked the peaceful and peace-proclaiming band; they had already murdered seven of the companions of Father Anthony, when one of the converts quickly seized the garment, hat and mantle of Father Anthony, put them on, and entreated the priest to flee. The savages, believing that he was the missionary, pursued the disguised Indian. With what fidelity and sacrifice did this Christian, scarcely awakened from the most barbarous paganism, yield himself up for his spiritual father." The author adds, that this is the kind of love of which St. John writes: "In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3 : 16.) It was very remarkable for us to find related in this work an incident bearing so close a resemblance to what happened more than a thousand years ago to St. Alban.

Christianity had already gained a firm footing in England, then subject to the Romans, when the emperor Diocletian ordered a persecution of the Christians in all parts of the Roman empire. At that time there lived in the city of Verulam a distinguished man, who had formerly spent some years in Rome, in order to finish his education. Alban, for so was he called, still worshiped the idols, but owing to an innate spirit of benevolence, or else to an unsettled belief in the Christian religion, he received hospitably into his house a priest, who was persecuted on account of his faith, and kept him there concealed from his enemies. Seeing his guest continually occupied with God, his own heart was touched by a ray of divine grace; he desired to imitate the piety of the priest and therefore listened to his instruction and exhortations. Alban soon perceived the wickedness of worshiping false gods, and he turned with his whole heart to Christ. Thus God rewarded the good deed of the pagan Alban in protecting the persecuted priest, with the most precious jewel of Christian faith.

The priest had remained for some time in the house of Alban, when, it having become known in the city, the governor was informed of the fact.

Soldiers were immediately ordered to seize the fugitive; but Alban having been apprised of their coming, changed clothes with his guest, gave himself up to the soldiers to be led to the governor, and thus saved the life of the priest. The governor was just sacrificing to his idols, when Alban was brought into his presence. He became greatly enraged when he saw that the Christian priest had escaped and that Alban had taken his place, who on the way to the tribunal had already told the soldiers that he was a Christian. The governor commanded him to step before the altar and threatened him with all the tortures that had been prepared for the priest, if he persisted in not sacrificing to the idols. The Saint, however, cared little about such threats, and frankly declared that he would not obey the order.

The governor asked Alban from what family he was descended; but the Saint replied: "That is of no importance to you; if, however, you wish to be informed of my religion, then know that I am a Christian." As the governor insisted upon knowing his name, Alban told it and added that he worshiped and served God, the Creator of the world. The governor urged him anew to sacrifice to the idols, but in vain;—and when by the governor's order he was cruelly scourged, he bore it with patience and even with joy. The magistrate saw that Alban could not be conquered by the rack, and he therefore sentenced him to be beheaded.

No one, up to that time, had died in England for the Christian faith; Alban was to be the first martyr of that country, and for that reason he was called also the Stephen of England. This circumstance may have induced God to characterize the death of the first martyr of England with striking miracles, in order to strengthen the faithful and to make the faithless repent the sooner. It was necessary to cross a river in order to reach the place of execution, and when the martyr drew near to the banks of the river they found that the bridge was crowded with a multitude of people, who desired to witness the execution of their fellow-townsman. There was no prospect, on account of the crowd, of taking the prisoner across the river before night, by means of the bridge; but St. Alban longed for the crown of martyrdom; he therefore approached nearer the river's edge and offered up a prayer, and immediately the water receded, so that they could cross the bed of the river dry shod. Only after St. Alban and thousands of other people had crossed, did the water flow back again into its channel.

This miracle made such an impression, that the very soldier who was appointed to execute St. Alban, repented. On arriving at the place of execution he threw away his sword, knelt down at the feet of the Saint, and declared that he would die either for or with the martyr. Owing to this occurrence the execution was delayed, and while the attendants were still deliberating, Alban with the people ascended to the top of a beautiful hill, where he was to be beheaded; and here, at his prayer, a fountain suddenly appeared. When at last St. Alban

was executed, we are told, that with the head of the martyr the eyes of the executioner also fell to the ground. The soldier first ordered to behead St. Alban, but who had refused and became converted, was also executed, and thus baptized in his own blood, that he shed in the faith and confession of Christ.

The death of St. Alban also saved the other Christians in England; they first sought refuge in the forests and deserts, and in uninhabited places, endeavoring to protect themselves from the rage of the pagans, and there they waited for the assistance of God, which He soon granted them; for the governor himself, astonished at the miracles that had accompanied the death of St. Alban, ceased to persecute the Christians, and began himself to venerate the blood of the martyrs. When under Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, the Christians enjoyed perfect peace and safety, they built a splendid church in honor of St. Alban in the place where he had suffered martyrdom. The city of Verulam, where Alban had lived, was at a later period destroyed by war, and after being rebuilt, it was called, in honor of its most distinguished son, St. Alban's. It became also a custom to read in the churches the history of St. Alban's martyrdom. The garment he had taken from the priest in order to save his life, was kept with great reverence in a box, and when a thousand years later, in the reign of king Edward II., the box was again opened, we are told, that the blood with which the garment of the martyr was stained, looked as fresh and red as though it had just been shed. When the pagan Saxons had invaded England, and destroyed the church of St. Alban, king Offa built a new one, and founded a convent in its neighborhood, calling it St. Alban's. The veneration of St. Alban was so endeared to the heart of this king, that he himself went to Rome to obtain from the Pope the authority for the veneration of the Saint and for the organization of the monastery. He endowed it with great privileges and rich donations, and to honor the memory of the first martyr of England, the Abbot of this monastery sat in Parliament.

For more than a thousand years St. Alban was highly revered in England, and his intercession most frequently implored as a great Saint and as a national Patron. He was worthy of this love; for scarcely had this man, already noble and distinguished, even as a pagan, received into his house a Christian, and into his soul the truth of Christianity, than the spirit of Christ wrought in him the most beautiful change. To love God above all and his neighbor as himself, is the highest duty that a man can perform. St. Alban sacrificed his life for God and for his fellow-man, and thus gave the most noble and most perfect proof of love. He was the true follower of Christ, and he acted according to the words of the Gospel: "He that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it." (Matt. 10 : 39.) Therefore if ever great veneration was due to a mortal, truly it is due to him.

But if what we have related so far has been pleasing to the Christian heart, what we have yet to say will certainly cause him to grieve; for the veneration

of St. Alban has almost entirely ceased in England. Three hundred years ago Henry VIII. ruled in England; he was an unscrupulous king, who tiring of his first wife, wished to marry another woman, Ann Boleyn. The Pope in conformity with his duty refused a divorce, and the king, who would rather leave the Catholic Church and renounce his faith than conquer his passion, declared himself head of the Church, and forced his subjects also to apostatize from the faith. The abbey of St. Alban was destroyed, and only by paying a sum of money to the destroyers did the inhabitants succeed in saving the church, in order to use it as a parish-church. The shrine of St. Alban had been magnificently adorned by Offa, Egfrid, and other pious kings; but now it was robbed of its ornaments and destroyed, and only a part of the relics were saved by Catholics, who had remained faithful to the Church, and they were taken by them to the city of Valladolid, in Spain. The author, who has collected the most correct information concerning St. Alban, and his relics, says: "If the coffin with its holy relics is still preserved, then may they remain concealed in the earth, until the English return again to the Catholic Church." And since that time neither St. Alban nor any other Saint is venerated in England by those who adhere to the so-called Anglican Church. Instead of venerating the body of a Saint, in whom has dwelt the spirit of Christ, the English now venerate persons who were anything but Saints in their lives, as for instance, the duke of Wellington, who was only a successful general, but whom they love and honor as though he had been a Saint; and in whose memory they have erected many monuments. All the images and relics of the Saints in Westminster Abbey, the glorious basilica of London, were removed, and replaced by the bones and statues of men who were highly regarded in the eyes of the world, but some of whom knew and cared very little about the teachings of Christ, such as statesmen, generals, authors, and even actors. This change of religion, in consequence of which they no longer honor the memory of the Saints, as was customary in the beginning of Christianity, but imitating the pagan Saxons destroy their tombs and the churches built in their honor—this apostacy from the Catholic Church, introduced in that country by the lust of a royal adulterer, they call a reformation, preaching the true Gospel, the pure word of God,—and their blindness they are pleased to style, enlightenment!

Not long after the death of the first martyr of England, another Alban appeared in the city of Mayence; it is, however, uncertain whether he came from Africa or from one of the isles of Greece. He was a priest, and labored for the conversion of the Huns, who at that time adhered to the Arian heresy. He shared, however, the fate of so many other missionaries. Once when proving to a large audience, that the Arian heresy wished to be Christianity without Christ, that is, without acknowledging Christ as God, the people, instead of being convinced by his truthful words, became greatly enraged. He was attacked

and beaten, dragged outside of the city and beheaded, just as his namesake and brother in spirit had been in England.

At a later period a chapel was built in honor of St. Alban in the place where he had been put to death, and his memory was so highly honored, that Charles the Great had his wife Fastrade, who had died in Frankfort, buried in the chapel of St. Alban in the city of Mayence. He also assisted Richolf, Archbishop of Mayence, in building a splendid church, dedicated to St. Alban, with which was connected a Benedictine abbey, and many Archbishops, princes and emperors were there entombed.

At the time of the reformation the Margrave, Albert of Brandenburgh, marched from place to place with a body of troops, robbing and destroying monasteries, charitable foundations and chapters. He also entered the city of Mayence, and his soldiers, joined by a mob of rioters, broke into the church of St. Alban and other churches, plundered what they could carry away and broke the rest to pieces; and after they had destroyed everything, they set fire to the house of God, and laid the church of St. Alban in ashes. Thus the history of St. Alban of Mayence bears the greatest similarity to that of St. Alban of England.

ST. ALOYSIUS.

(June 21.)

'Pure in Heart.'

On the seventh of June we spoke of a Saint who might be looked upon as a living illustration of the words: "Blessed are the poor in spirit;"—the Saint, whose life we intend to sketch to-day, will give a similar illustration of "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

St. Aloysius was the eldest son of the Marquis of Castiglione, who, regarding him as his successor, intended to educate him in a manner to fit him for the high position he would fill in life. Aloysius, when scarcely four years old, was obliged to accompany his father to witness the military exercises of the army, and while among the soldiers, learned from them some improper expressions, the real meaning of which he did not understand; when his attention, however, was afterwards called to this fact, he confessed his sins with tears of repentance. He was but seven years old when he resolved to devote his entire life to God, and at this early period of his life he already showed signs of great piety and of aversion to the world. In his ninth year he was sent to Florence to be instructed

according to his rank; but while human teachers cultivated and stored his mind with knowledge, he had still another teacher, divine grace, that constantly enriched his soul with heavenly virtues. Veneration and love of the Mother of God implanted themselves so deeply in his heart, that in his great desire to please the most pure Virgin, he made before her image a vow of perfect chastity. He did all in his power to remain faithful to his vow, and for that reason avoided all conversation with persons of the other sex. And God blessed him with the grace of perfect purity, so that those who possessed his entire confidence, assert, that Aloysius during his whole life had never had an impure desire or sinned against his vow by an impure thought.

When Aloysius went with his father to Lasal, he frequently visited two convents. Observing here the retired life of the religious and their continual intercourse with God, he thought of renouncing his right of succession as the first-born son of a prince, in favor of his younger brother Rudolphus, and of joining a religious order; and having endeavored to find out the will of God in this regard by most earnest prayer and frequent communions, he at last determined to carry out his resolution. Although at that time his plan lay concealed in his heart, he nevertheless endeavored already to exercise in the world the self-denial of a truly monastic life. Thus, for instance, he had no fire made in his room in winter; he did nothing to cure his freezing hands, as he desired to suffer for God's sake; during the festivities in his father's palace he never left his room; every Friday he fasted in memory of the passion of Christ, and every Saturday in honor of the Mother of God, tasting on these days only a little bread dipped in water; at the table he ate only of such dishes as were not agreeable to his taste, and he spent whole hours every day in prayer and meditation.

Aloysius was obliged to accompany his father to the court of the king of Spain; he remained there for two years, but in the midst of a world full of luxury and pride, he lived so secludedly, and showed such earnest piety, that the courtiers never dared to utter an improper word in his presence. They often remarked, that Aloysius was not made of flesh and blood like other men.

We have already spoken of the resolution of Aloysius to withdraw from the world. To fulfill his resolution he determined to join the Society of Jesus. He felt more inclined to enter an order where he might serve God in seclusion and quiet, in prayer and meditation; but having read that the society, besides its spiritual exercises, offered to its members special opportunities of laboring for the salvation of souls, he conquered the inclination of his heart and resolved to join the Jesuits.

When the marquis was informed of the resolution of his son, he was greatly provoked, and even threatened to punish him, unless he yielded his worldly wishes; but Aloysius said: "I shall be very happy if I am permitted to suffer for God's sake;" and when the father remarked that it would have grieved him less if he had chosen an order where there was an opportunity given him to

rise to the dignity of a Bishop or to some other high position in the church, Aloysius replied: "I have chosen this order for the very reason, that it forbids its members to accept any place of honor; if I were ambitious, I would remain in the world, which would pay me every mark of respect as the eldest son of a prince." The father still thought it possible to change the mind of his son, and for that purpose he sent several priests to him, who were told to persuade him to renounce his determination; but Aloysius declared, that he would adhere to his resolution, and that he regarded it his duty, rather to obey the will of God, who had called him to the Society of Jesus, than to fulfill the worldly wish of his father. The marquis finally gave his consent to his son becoming a Jesuit, and Aloysius signed a document, in which he renounced his birth-right in favor of his younger brother Rudolphus.

At last, when St. Aloysius had overcome several other obstacles, he arrived in Rome, where he was received as a novice in the Society of Jesus. Although the son of a prince, he was, according to the rules of the order, treated no better than any other novice, and in fact he was very glad when allowed to perform the most menial services. The only temptation that befell him during his novitiate was a feeling of joylessness, and the thought that he perhaps had been mistaken in becoming a member of the Society of Jesus; but these were only passing clouds in the serene sky of his pure soul.

Aloysius was always so occupied with God, that even when at his meals he directed his whole attention to what was read, or gave himself up to pious meditation. The great care he took to remain free from sin, and his great desire to be always occupied with God, caused him to love and practice the virtue of silence. Persons distinguished for eminent virtues very easily become self-complacent, but Aloysius was entirely free from that vice. He proved this upon occasions when others would have looked upon themselves as dishonored; thus at his own request the superiors provided him with clothes that were already much worn; he regarded it as a favor to be allowed to collect alms in the city of Rome, and he wished to be reproached in the presence of others. Once the master of novices, in order to try him, ordered him to assist the butler, and told the latter to blame Aloysius for everything that he did; yet although the blame was undeserved, he never uttered a word in his defence. At another time, when the steward erroneously thought him guilty of a fault, he even suffered a penance, although he could have easily avoided it by making an explanation. If in conversation others differed from him in opinion, he simply stated his views of the subject, but never defended them if opposed.

According to the testimony of those who knew him well, Aloysius had mortified every passion to such a degree, that he was even free from venial sins, and as in his examination of conscience he found nothing to repent of, he thought himself in his humility guilty of blindness, and in his great anxiety he went to the superior to ask his advice. His soul had become so purified by the grace of

God, and by continual spiritual exercises, that during his long prayers and meditations he was never disturbed by any distraction; and when questioned in regard to this fact by his superiors, he declared that all the distractions he had experienced in his devotions during the six months of his novitiate did not amount to the length of time that it would take to say a "Hail Mary." On the contrary, according to his own statement, it caused him as much difficulty to turn his thoughts from God, as it caused others to direct theirs to God.

When Aloysius, according to the rule of the Jesuits, had been a novice for two years, he took his vows, and received minor orders, and from that time, if possible, he increased in holiness. Father Cepari, a contemporary of St. Aloysius, who spent several years with him in the same college, has left us a biography of him, in which he enumerates his virtues and says, in regard to his humility, that Aloysius was always ready and desirous to perform the most menial services; he was glad if permitted to wash the plates and dishes, sweep the floor and trim the lamps. He obeyed the orders of the superiors conscienciously, as he would those of God Himself; for he was convinced that by doing so he only fulfilled the will of God. His heart belonged so wholly and exclusively to God, that all discourse not relating to divine matters annoyed him; he therefore begged of his superiors permission to speak even in his hours of recreation only upon religious subjects. The purest Christian motives guided his actions; thus, for instance, he sought the acquaintance of the new students of the college, and for days and weeks spent his leisure hours in their company; but he gradually withdrew from them and sought the company of those who had come after them. Whoever judges superficially, may regard St. Aloysius as unsteady in his friendships, and yet the only reason for acting thus was his great wish to promote in the new-comer the ardor of divine love, and the desire of virtue and religious perfection.

About a year before his death, Aloysius handed to the Father Rector all that he had written on religious subjects, and when the Rector asked him why he deprived himself of his writings, he said: "I do it because they are my only joy in the world; I will sacrifice them also, in order that I may truly renounce everything." When the pestilence was raging in Rome, Aloysius obtained permission to assist in nursing the sick. The superiors granted his request unwillingly, for they knew to what great danger he exposed himself; and their apprehensions were only too well founded, for Aloysius caught the disease. When he was taken sick, his countenance exhibited great serenity, for he thought that the wished-for time of his release had now arrived; but even this joyful feeling and his great longing after death appeared sinful to him, and he therefore asked the opinion and advice of his confessor. The latter calmed his fears, for his longing was not of an earthly nature, but a desire to be with God. The feelings of his pure soul, while in this state, will be best shown by a letter addressed by him to his mother during his illness. He says: "A month ago I was

on the eve of being blessed with the most precious grace of the Lord, for I was at the point, as I hoped, of dying in His love. I had already received the holy viaticum and extreme unction, but my disease has since changed into a lingering fever. The physicians endeavor to restore my bodily health, but I think with joy that the Lord will bestow upon me a far more precious gift. Thus I wait contentedly, and hope that it will please the Lord to call me in a few months from the world of the dead to that of the living, from the company of mortals here below to that of angels and Saints in heaven, and from the midst of earthly and perishable things to the sight and contemplation of God, who is the highest and greatest good. This will cause you comfort, because you love me and desire my true welfare. I entreat you to pray for me, that after the short time which I have still to spend upon the surging sea of this world, through the merits of His only begotten Son and the intercession of his Blessed Mother, the Lord may find me worthy of entering the land of promise, clad in the garment of purity, there to rejoice with God forever.

"Your most obedient son in our Lord,

ALOYSIUS GONZAGA."

From the moment Aloysius was obliged to keep his bed to the time of his death, he desired that they should only speak to him of God and of eternal life. He sometimes asked for his clothes, would leave the bed, drag himself with difficulty to a table upon which stood a crucifix, take it in his hands and kiss it with reverence and love; he did the same also with an image of the Mother of God, and with those of other Saints. The brother who attended him in his sickness wished to make it easier for him and offered to carry the crucifix to his bed; but Aloysius refused his offer, saying: "My dear brother, these are my stations." It was the prayer of Aloysius to die during the Octave of Corpus Christi or on Friday; he once said to another brother, who had called to see him: "I have received good news; I shall die within a week; assist me, I pray you, in singing the 'Te Deum,' to thank God for this favor;"—and they sang together as he had desired. The last day of the Octave the Father Provincial asked him: "What is the matter with you, brother Aloysius?" "My Father," replied he, "I am on my way." "Whither?" asked the Provincial. "To paradise," was his answer. "To paradise?" repeated the Provincial. "Yes, my Father, to paradise," replied Aloysius; "if my sins do not prevent me, I hope through the mercy of God to enter there."

When at the point of death, he looked at the crucifix and took off his cap. It was placed again on his head, but he took it off again, directed his gaze towards the crucifix, and said: "Christ died not with his head covered." St. Aloysius expired after midnight at the end of the Octave and at the beginning of Friday, pronouncing the most holy name of Jesus. His death occurred in the year 1591, in the twenty-third year of his age.

The celebrated Cardinal Bellarmine, the confessor of St. Aloysius, testified in writing that Aloysius never committed a mortal sin; that from his seventh year up he had always led a perfect life, that he never felt sensual desires, and that he had always been a model of obedience, humility, mortification, abstemiousness, wisdom, holiness, and purity of soul;—and St. Mary Magdalen, of Pazzi, who saw St. Aloysius in an ecstacy, said, full of astonishment: "I had never imagined so much glory in heaven, as I perceived in Aloysius; he is a great saint." "BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD."

Frequent miracles occurred by invoking the intercession of St. Aloysius; many persons were freed from unclean temptations by praying to St. Aloysius; for the intercession of the Saints is very effective if we ask them to obtain for us the virtues for which they were themselves distinguished.

Pope Clement XII. has granted a plenary indulgence to all young men and women, who, worthily prepared, receive Holy Communion on the six Sundays preceding the 21st of June, and who recite on each of these Sundays six Our Fathers and six Hail Marys, with the Glory be to the Father, &c., for the propagation of the faith and for the grace of chastity.

BLESSED CHRISTINA.

(June 22.)

"Satan."

THERE are persons who pretend to be Christians, but who nevertheless deny the existence of evil spirits, although the Bible speaks very often and in the most positive terms of Satan, who is the prince of evil spirits. Certainly no one is more pleased with this unbelief than Satan himself, for it enables him to attain his ends and designs upon such persons with much greater certainty, just as it is easier for the hunter to secure his game, if the deer is not aware of his approach. The Saints, however, have not only shown us how the commandments of Christ are to be obeyed, but they have also variously illustrated the truths of religion.

Thus it was the will of God, that Blessed Christina should be persecuted by Satan, as other Saints had been persecuted by wicked persons, and thus by the life of Blessed Christina the real existence and power of evil spirits became especially visible. The description of the struggles Blessed Christina underwent, fill a whole book, and some occurrences of so terrible a nature are narrated, that we could scarcely believe them, if they were not confirmed by

the letters of Blessed Christina herself as well as by many eye-witnesses. The greater part of the work was written by a Dominican, who as her spiritual guide enjoyed her whole confidence; and selecting therefrom, we will only mention some of the temptations to which she was exposed.

Christina's native place was but a few miles distant from the city of Cologne, and she was but thirteen years old when she left her relatives and acquaintances, and went to that city, in order to lead a life pleasing to God. She was received by the Beguines, a society of pious virgins and widows, residing in the city of Cologne; she fasted often, living only on bread and water, never wore linen garments, girded herself with a knotted rope, made herself a couch of wood and stones, in order to awaken earlier to prayer, fell upon her knees two hundred times every night, during the day implored the intercession of all the Saints, whose names she knew, that they might obtain for her the true love of God, went always barefooted and despised all bodily comfort, because her mind was always occupied with the passion of Christ.

Once she fell into an ecstasy, so that she had to be carried from the church, and she remained in that condition for three days. The Beguines imagined her to be an epileptic or in a trance. Christina, however, continued to meditate upon the passion of Christ, which caused her sometimes to shed abundant tears, but which filled her heart and mind with a delicious feeling of happiness. Christina had lived thus for two years, when Satan appeared to her in the form of St. Bartholomew, saying: "Daughter, I know that you pray much and that you desire to enter the kingdom of God; know then that you will certainly attain your wish by putting an end to your life; for that is quickly done, and you will thus possess heaven immediately." From that time the temptation did not leave her for six months. As often as she was alone, she was greatly tempted to kill herself, and when at the well, she could hardly refrain from jumping into it; she would frequently leave the church, determined to carry out her design. Once after she had been bled, she was on the point of tearing off the bandage, in order to die from the loss of blood; but the fear that this might be sinful and lead her to hell, restrained her. At night she often heard a voice, saying: "Rise quickly, it is the will of God that you should put an end to your life; if you do not obey immediately, you will be lost forever." Later she was tempted to doubt the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and also the power and omniscience of God, so that she imagined it impossible for her either to pray or to confess her sins. She had other temptations also; when she desired to eat, it appeared to her as if a toad, snake, or spider were concealed in her food; she refused with horror to touch her meals, and preferred rather to suffer great hunger. When at the advice of a priest she tried to overcome her horror, she could not resist vomiting; when she raised her cup, in order to quench her thirst, she thought she heard a voice saying: "If you drink, then you will drink the devil;"—and looking into the

cup, she saw either a toad, snake or spider. With this temptation was she also troubled for six months.

Again Satan appeared to her in the form of the Apostle Bartholomew, whom Christina especially revered, and said to her in a gentle voice: "Dearest daughter, your works are good in the eyes of God, and you please Him very much; but you have enjoyed spiritual and bodily comfort for some time, and now it is necessary that you should suffer bodily pain before you enter into the presence of God, as you desire." Thus was she tempted day and night for a whole month, and at last he brought her thorns, and said: "As you have never suffered much pain, I offer you these thorns, that you may mortify your body for the sake of God; this will please Him in the highest degree." Christina, however, inspired by the Holy Ghost, thought to herself: "This is the devil, for if I now bear mortification with difficulty, it is not the will of God that I shall try myself beyond my strength." Then Satan himself tempted her, saying: "Because you did not obey the command of God, it is His will that you shall be damned forever;"—but Christina replied: "You would have no power over me, if it were not given you from above; yet you are not able to deprive me of life, because God is with me."

Once during Lent, when her whole mind was occupied with the passion of Christ, Satan tried to persuade her into the belief, that God had never suffered, and upon another occasion he told her: "See, you are leading a most wretched life, you never enjoy peace. Those, however, who live in the world, take delight in their parents, friends, children, and husbands,"—and showing to her a great treasure, he continued: "If you are willing to renounce conventual life and to live in the world, I will make you rich and endow you with a very long life. All priests and nuns who have taken the vow of chastity, have deceived themselves; it is wicked for them to live thus, because God has from the beginning so arranged it, that all should enter the married state;"—and when Christina resisted these temptations also, he threatened to spread a report of her being an immoral woman.

(Christina lived 1300 years after Christ; two centuries later, Martin Luther, who, as he says himself, was frequently tempted by the devil, was disturbed by the same thought; but he did not show himself as strong as the virgin Christina; for he left the convent, renounced the monastic life, and married a nun, who had also left her convent.)

Once, when Christina intended to receive Holy Communion, a gentle voice said to her in the night: "O dearest daughter, you will do wrong to receive communion to-morrow morning, for the priest will let the consecrated Host fall to the ground and thereby cause great disturbance, and besides you are a great sinner and not worthy of it." Doubting whether this warning had come from God, she commenced to pray earnestly, and soon discovered that it was the devil who wished to dissuade her from receiving the Holy Eucharist.

Upon another occasion, when Christina was going to church, a horse came running towards her at full speed. She stepped hastily aside, but in vain, for it was Satan. The horse rushed at her, flames issued from its mouth, it jumped with its fore-feet upon her shoulders, trod her down, seized her head with its teeth, and tore off a piece of the skin; but as soon as she pronounced the name of Jesus, the devil disappeared in a sulphurous cloud.

Three successive nights before Whit-Sunday, Satan appeared in the chamber of Christina, having assumed the form of a deceased priest whom she had highly esteemed. His appearance was terrible to look at, and he told her that he was lost forever, and mentioned several causes why he was damned. In her great consternation, Christina implored the Lord to make known to her whether she had been deceived in the great confidence she had placed in the piety of the priest, and the devil himself, during the night before Whit-Sunday, confessed to her that he had tempted and tried to delude her.

Once again in the night her chamber was brightly illuminated, and she perceived two most beautiful figures, who thus gently addressed her: "Behold, beloved, we are two angels sent to you by your heavenly bridegroom, to whom you have always shown yourself a faithful and humble servant, and who is pleased by your precious virtues. We shall bring you to-night comfort and joy in the place where you have already suffered so much;" and they addressed many more sweetly sounding words to the virgin to fill her with pride; but Christina, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, recognized the infernal craftiness of Satan, and in the name of Jesus ordered the evil spirits to withdraw.

That these temptations were not merely the offspring of a heated imagination, but were really caused by Satan, was proved by many occurrences, when Christina was tormented in a visible manner and in the presence of witnesses. We shall mention but a few instances.

The devil once burned her visibly in the face near the chin, and when the burns began to heal he burned her ears, afterwards her eyes and forehead, and then her nose, so that people were filled with compassion when they saw her. During all this time, Satan tried to persuade her to deny God, and he even pierced her ears and threatened to kill her, if she refused to deny the Saviour, saying that he had the power to do it. Even Gertrude, Christina's sister, who slept with her in the same bed, was burned in the face, for which reason she would no longer sleep with her; but Christina told the devil that she was ready to die a thousand times for Christ. Wicked spirits also would take hold of Christina's body, and once on a cold night in winter, dragged her through the briars of a neighboring wood. It sometimes even happened that disgusting matter would be suddenly thrown upon her and upon those who were near her, not only in her dwelling, but also at church. The last torment with which the wicked spirit tried to harm her, was in afflicting her with a dangerous hemorrhage, that continued troubling her for eighteen months. She was miraculously

cured on the 5th of June, 1288, and lived twenty-four years longer. Like Job, Satan was permitted to trouble her but for a certain space of time.

What we have related of the temptations and torments that Christina had to suffer, do not constitute the tenth part of what is contained in her biography. In the lives of other Saints, we read sometimes of outward persecutions on the part of Satan, and when we consider the passages of the Bible where it speaks of the wicked spirits who fill the air, our wonder is less excited that Christina and other Saints were visibly tempted by evil spirits, than that they do not injure our body and life.

We should consider, dear reader, that God sometimes permits the Saints to be tempted in order to strengthen them in virtue; and we have seen what craftiness and hatred Satan displays when using his power. If you turn from God by leading a wicked life, and your guardian angel leaves you, you are then entirely without protection in the moment of death. Have you never heard of the dreadful expression so often used by the unrepenting sinner on his death-bed: "I see Satan in the room!"

The lost soul, after death, is without protection, and is given up to wicked spirits. Imagine to yourself the night when Christ was given into the power of the wicked executioners, how they spit upon Him, abused, maltreated, and blindfolded Him, wounded His head with thorns, gave Him no rest, mocked and sneered at Him. That night was but a figure of that eternal night into which the damned will be plunged. These executioners were, we may say, but the apprentices of Satan, for the manner in which he will torment the lost soul is as infinitely more cruel, as the evil spirits are infinitely more dreadful, more wrathful, and more ingenious in inventing torments, than are the most wicked mortals.

ST. ETHELDREDA.

(June 23.)

"As is the Sin, so is the Punishment."

In the seventh century, the age in which Etheldreda lived, England was not yet united under the rule of one king, but was governed by several princes, one of whom was the father of Etheldreda. She was not only of royal descent, but was also the child of truly Christian parents; her mother, Hereswyda, has been found worthy of canonization.

Etheldreda was distinguished for her personal and intellectual accomplish-

ments, and many princes admired and loved her, but Prince Tonbert especially endeavored to win the heart of the princess, and asked her hand in marriage. Her father consented, and although it was her heart's desire to remain unmarried, the obedience she owed her parents made her finally yield to their wishes. Tonbert and Etheldreda were married, but they lived together as brother and sister; she thus imitated the Mother of the Lord, and, although married, remained pure in body and soul. She and her husband lived together in a higher union; they were united by a holy life of prayer and charity. Tonbert died in the third year of their marriage, and Etheldreda withdrew then to the isle of Ely, where she intended to serve God undisturbed by the world. While there, she associated only with the pious, practiced good works by watching, fasting, praying, and by singing hymns of praise, so that her holiness and desire to possess heaven continually increased; but after she had finished one task, God burdened her with another, and, indeed, a more difficult one. King Egfried, who ruled in the north of England, so greatly admired the precious virtues of St. Etheldreda, that he did all in his power to induce her to become his wife, and, aided by her relatives, he succeeded in his efforts; but in her second marriage she also obtained from her husband his consent to live in continency with her, and their union in this manner lasted for twelve years. The king had daily opportunity of admiring the earnest piety of the queen, who spent many nights without rest, and many days without food, and who in joy and sorrow was continually occupied with God.

The desire of the queen to devote herself entirely to Christ increased constantly, and she, therefore, entreated the king to permit her to join a religious order. Egfried resisted her petitions for a long time, but Etheldreda did not cease to implore him most urgently, and, overcome by her firmness, he at last consented. Etheldreda took the veil in the convent of Coldingham, where St. Edda, a relative of her husband, was Abbess. A later account of her life says, the king regretted having consented to her leaving him, and it was his intention to take her forcibly from the convent, and Etheldreda, therefore, left the convent so as to avoid the importunity of the king. It is certain that she went again to the isle of Ely after having spent a year in Coldingham, during which time she made herself perfectly acquainted with the rules and regulations of the convent. She then established a convent on the island, and charged herself with the spiritual care of the sisters. From that moment Etheldreda no longer wore linen, but woolen garments only; the great feasts excepted, she ate only once during the day; matins were sung at midnight, and after them she remained in the church praying until dawn.

Etheldreda was so highly esteemed, and the confidence she enjoyed was so great, that many women of the noblest families renounced the world, and withdrew to Ely to lead a life pleasing to God under the guidance of the saintly

Abbess; and, although the discipline of her convent was very severe and rigid, they submitted without a murmur to all the rules and regulations.

Sexburga, the eldest sister of St. Etheldreda, had been the wife of King Erkonbert, but her husband having died, she built a convent, and entered it with her daughter Ermenildis. Though Abbess of the convent, from knowing the great piety of Etheldreda, and hearing of her great fame, she resolved rather to obey than to command, and to enter the convent of Ely as an humble sister. She was received by Etheldreda with tears of joy, and henceforth it was their only desire to follow the path of virtue, and to live in the fear of God, and in this manner did they constantly increase in perfection until the end of their earthly career.

The nearer, however, that Etheldreda, the saintly widow and virgin, reached the height of perfection, the more frequent and greater were the miracles whereby the Almighty manifested her sanctity to the world. She was especially blessed with the power of delivering those possessed by wicked spirits, and many persons were miraculously healed not only by applying to Etheldreda in person, but even by invoking her name, although at a distance from her.

Etheldreda, in a spirit of prophecy, foretold the sickness that would cause her death, and the number of those in the convent who would also fall victims to the disease. She made this prophecy in the presence of all the sisters, and exhorted them with much zeal to renounce every worldly inclination, and to strive for heaven. And, indeed, not long after, all whom the Saint had named died in the Lord, and finally she herself fell dangerously ill. Although she suffered violent pain in consequence of a tumor in her throat, she continued her usual spiritual exercises, and thanked God who chastens all whom He loves. She rejoiced in being called upon to suffer the pain in the throat, saying: "I am certain that I suffer deservedly in my throat, because, when still a young maiden, I used to burden my neck with the superfluous weight of chains. Vanity induced me to adorn my neck with jewels, and, therefore, I praise and thank the divine goodness that I now suffer pain where I formerly wore worldly ornaments. I believe God sends me this pain that I may expiate the guilt of my vanity, so that, instead of gold and jewels, I now have a tumor and inflammation of the throat."

These words of Etheldreda confirmed the truth of the old saying: "Wherewith thou didst sin, with the same thou shalt be punished;" and if such was the case with the holy Etheldreda on account of a fault committed in the thoughtlessness of youth, how much more true will it be in respect to us, if we deliberately violate the law of God! The Lord sometimes punishes a wicked person here below in such a manner that the chastised sinner, and even others, may clearly see the cause and meaning of such a visitation. Persons of luxurious habits, and those who have only lived for pleasure, are frequently reduced to the most abject want; parents, who have given an unjust preference to one of

their children over the others, are often punished and disgraced by their favorite child; persons who indulge in immoral practices, frequently fall victims to terrible diseases; the man who curses and swears, often brings his curses upon himself, and he who wishes ill to others, often sees his wicked wish fulfilled in his own person. It will be so in the other world, for the sinner who has not been punished here below, will be punished in eternity. The rich man who thought less of the beggar Lazarus than he did of a dog, implored Lazarus in the other world for a drop of water; and in the "Following of Christ" it is said: "In what things a man hath most sinned, in those things shall he be most grievously punished. There the slothful will be pricked with burning goads, the gluttonous tormented with extreme hunger and thirst; there the luxurious and the lovers of pleasure will have burning pitch and fetid sulphur rained upon them, and the envious, like rabid dogs, will howl for grief. There will be no vice but will have its own peculiar torment. There the proud will be filled with all confusion, and the avaricious pinched with the most miserable want. There one hour of punishment will be more grievous than a hundred years of the most bitter penance here."

Dear reader, learn in time to guard against sin, for every sin is a seed that will bring forth suffering in the future; and if you are visited by affliction, then inquire if it is not a punishment for sins that you have forgotten, but which God has remembered; therefore bear your trials in a spirit of true penance!

The disease of Etheldreda grew daily more painful and dangerous, and the physicians endeavored to do every thing in their power to diminish the violence of her sufferings. One of them, named Kinnfrid, advised the opening of the tumor, and Etheldreda was in consequence so relieved that her friends thought she would recover; but it was not the will of God, and the third day her former pain returned, and she declared that her hour had come. She then had all the sisters once more assembled around her, and spoke to them of eternal life, the desire to possess which, filled her heart, and after she had received the last Sacraments, and prayed God to bless the convent, she exchanged pain and death for bliss and everlasting life.

Queen Etheldreda, in accordance with her wish, was buried without any marks of distinction in a plain coffin, and her sister Sexburga succeeded her as Abbess. So many miracles occurred at the grave of St. Etheldreda, that the Abbess thought proper to place the holy remains in a church, and for that purpose she wished to procure a stone coffin; but there was no stone large enough on the island for a coffin. She therefore ordered a search to be instituted in other places for a stone, and, behold! near a ruin on a neighboring island, the people discovered a perfectly finished coffin of beautiful white marble, and, thanking God that they had found what they had sought for, they brought the coffin to Ely. The grave was then opened, and they found the body of the Saint as perfect as if she had just died, although she had been dead for six-

teen years. Kinnfrid, the physician, who was present when the body was disinterred, testified to the miracle. He says that Etheldreda looked as if she was only sleeping, and the scar made by himself on her throat a few days before her death, was yet visible. Even the garment in which the deceased had been buried was not in the least discolored. Thus the body of the saintly virgin Etheldreda remained after death as free from corruption as she had kept it free from all carnal desires during her life.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

(June 24.)

"The Morning-Star of Christianity."

It would be wrong not to speak of one who received more praise from the Saviour Himself than did ever any mortal man, or to choose another Saint whose memory the Church also celebrates on this day. All that we can tell of his birth, life, and death is already familiar to every Christian; therefore, instead of relating the history of St. John, we prefer to give an extract from a sermon of St. Augustine, the great Father of the Church, the subject of which is St. John the Baptist. In that sermon he says:

"There is none among the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, whose birth is celebrated by the Church of Christ; we celebrate only the birth of St. John and that of Christ. John, born of an aged barren woman, Christ of a youthful Virgin. Barrenness brings forth John, immaculate purity brings forth the Saviour; the birth of John is foretold by an Angel; Christ is conceived by the message of the Angel; the birth of John is not believed, and the father becomes dumb; the birth of Christ is believed, and He is conceived by faith. The faith in the heart of the Virgin preceded the conception of the Saviour, and yet the words of Zachary, addressed to the Angel who announced the birth of John: 'Whereby shall I know this? for I am old, and my wife is advanced in years,' (Luke 1 : 18,) are almost the same as those used by Mary in answer to the Angel: 'How shall this be done, because I know not man?' (Luke 1 : 34.) To Zachary was said: 'And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak until the day wherein these things shall come to pass; because thou hast not believed my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time.' And to Her was said: 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.' (Luke 1 : 35.) He is reproached, and She

is instructed in almost the same words: 'Whereby shall I know this?' and 'How shall this be done?' But He who heard the words, saw also into the heart; a thought was concealed in the words of both, but only concealed from man, and not from the Angel, and not from Him who spoke through the Angel. Doubt and unbelief were evident in the words of Zachary, but interrogation and inquiry in those of Mary. John was born when the sun had set, and night began to fall; Christ was born when the night began to decrease, and day to appear; and the words of John seem to refer to this fact when he says: 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' (John 3 : 30.) John seems to have been placed as a threshold between the two testaments, the new and the old. In him is, therefore, represented the person of the old time, and the announcement of the new. As a man of the past he is born of aged parents, and as a man of the new time he, is already declared a prophet in the womb of his mother. For not yet born at the visitation of the Holy Virgin, he exulted in the womb of his mother, and shows himself consequently, before his birth, as the precursor of Him who was not yet born.

"After his birth he received a name, and his father was again enabled to speak. But this must be understood symbolically, and shows a great mystery. Zachary lost the power of speech until John, the forerunner of the Lord, was born, when it was again restored to him. What else is the dumbness of Zachary but the silent prophecy, concealed as it were, and locked up until the announcement of Christ? It was unclosed, and revealed itself when he came who prophesied. The return of speech to Zachary at the birth of John signifies the same as the rending of the veil at the crucifixion of Christ. The tongue is freed, because the voice is born; for when John announced the Lord, he said: 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.' (John 1 : 23.) *John* is the *voice*, but the *Lord* is the *Word;* John is the temporary voice, Christ is the eternal Word from the beginning. The voice without word echoes in the ear, but does not edify the heart. When I think what I wish to say, then the word is already in my heart. When I wish my voice to reach you, then I make use of the voice. As soon as the sound of the voice has made you understand the word, then the sound passes away, but the word conveyed to you by the sound is in your heart, and is also still in mine. Therefore John, the voice, says: 'He must increase, and I must decrease.' (John 3 : 30.) Do you wish to see how the voice dies away, and the divine word remains? The baptism of John, where is it now? It did its work, and was then discontinued. The baptism of Christ is still used. But because it is difficult to distinguish the word from the voice, John himself was taken for Christ, that is the VOICE for the WORD; the voice, however, declared itself as such in order not to offend the Word, and said: 'I am the voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord.' (Matt. 3 : 3.) It was the will of God, that a man blessed with so much grace that he was even mistaken for the Saviour, should give testimony to the

Saviour. Christ Himself said: 'There hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist;' (Matt. 11 : 11) consequently He who is greater than John must be more than man. Great is the witness that Christ bears of Himself; yet weak eyes shun the light of the sun, and require the light of a lamp. Therefore the approaching day (Christ) sent John before Him as a lighted candle. God the Father says in the prophecy: '*I have prepared a lamp for my anointed*' (Ps. 131 : 17), John, the herald of the Saviour, the precursor of the approaching Judge, the friend of the Bridegroom.

"Christ was to come in the flesh, but not as an Angel, not as a messenger. And how was He to come? Born in mortal flesh, as an infant, placed in a crib, wrapped in swaddling clothes, nourished with milk, growing stronger with advancing years, and at last also carried off by death. These are all signs of great humility. And whose is this humility? Of the Exalted and Sublime. How exalted? Search not for Him in this world, ascend even beyond the stars, and when you shall have reached the heavenly hosts of the Angels, they will say to you: '*Ascend also beyond us.*' When you shall have reached the thrones, dominations, principalities, and powers, then will you hear the words: '*Ascend also beyond us, for we, too, were created. All things were made by Him.*' Ascend beyond the whole creation, beyond all that is made or placed in order, all that is physical or spiritual, ascend beyond all this; ascend in faith—for except by faith you cannot do so—up to the Creator, and here you will find: '*In the beginning was the Word,*'—not like a creature once created, but from the beginning. What was first has always been. His Word, *that was in the beginning, and that was with God, and that was God, and by which all things were made, and without which nothing was made, and in which is life*, has come among us. Has it come to men worthy of it? Not at all; for Christ died for a wicked race. We were not worthy of having mercy shown us; we did not receive it on account of our merits, for sinners merit punishment, but on account of His mercy, and for His name's sake He became our help. Consider to whom He came, and the greatness of Him who came. How did He come to us? '*The Word was made flesh in order to dwell among us.*' For if He had come as God, who could have looked upon Him? He assumed humanity which we have received by nature, but not our sinfulness which we have contracted through our own fault. Of these two, the human nature and the human sinfulness, He assumed the one, and healed the other; He, a hidden God, appeared as a man among men.

"Who then is able to bear testimony to the sun concealed under a cloud of the flesh? So great a light that He, who is still greater, must certainly be the sun Himself. That light is John the Baptist, whom none born of women surpasses in greatness. And yet he says: 'The latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose,' (John 1 : 27,) and, 'Of His fullness we all have received.' (John 1 : 16.) In what humble terms does he not speak of himself, and in what

exalted terms of Christ! And yet he walked not among the disciples of the Lord, did not follow Him as did Peter, Andrew, and the rest, but he gathered disciples around himself, who were called disciples of John. It was necessary without doubt that Christ should be announced by a man so great that he seemed almost to rival Him. John had disciples, and so had Christ. There were Prophets, and they had disciples, but not when Christ had appeared. There were afterwards great Apostles, but they were only great as disciples of Christ, not because they had their own disciples. John had disciples, and baptized, inwardly united with Christ, but in appearance outwardly separated from Him, in order that they so much the more should believe in him as a witness. Peter, Andrew, and the rest also bare witness of the Lord, but it could be said to them: 'You praise Him whom you follow, you announce Him to whom you adhere. Let there come a witness who has, like Christ, disciples.' And they went to John, and told him, in order to make him jealous: 'He to whom thou gavest testimony, behold, he baptizeth, and all men come to him' (John 3 : 26); but instead of disparaging him, the light-bearing witness, burns the more brightly, and he replies: 'You yourselves do bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ; He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; He that cometh from above is above all.' (John 3 : 28, 29, 31.) Then Christ was loved by those who believed in John, and the enemies were embarrassed when he, in whom they endeavored to create feelings of envy, proclaimed Christ. The servant acknowledges his Master, the creature bears witness to the Creator, and he does it willingly, for he is not zealous for himself, but for the friend and bridegroom.

"What the groomsman is to the bridegroom at the wedding of man, John is to the Lord. But Christ is the bridegroom, the Mediator between God and man, inasmuch as He was man. For inasmuch as He is God, He is not Mediator, but is equal to the Father; He is what the Father is, and with the Father is ONE God. How could that exalted Being be a Mediator, from whom we were so widely separated, especially by sin? In order to become our Mediator He had to assume something which He was not before, and yet remain what He was. He is God, and God He remains: the human nature is added to God, and becomes ONE person in such a manner that He was not half God and half man, but all God and all man—Saviour as God, Mediator as man—through Him to Him, not through another to another.

"The whole human race which through Adam was alienated from God, through this mediation is reconciled with Him: 'Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death: and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned.' (Rom. 5 : 12.) No one is excepted therefrom. By ONE only are the high and the low, the old and the young saved: 'For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' (1 Tim. 2 : 5.) 'By a man *came* death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead. And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.' (1 Cor. 15 : 21, 22.)

The question may be asked: Is a child in need of the Saviour? Certainly it is in need of Him; for this is proved by the mother who, strong in faith, hastens with her child to the Church to have it baptized; this is proved by Mother Church herself, who admits the child to baptism. Who dares to contradict such a mother? And finally the crying of the child proves his need. Weak nature itself bears witness as far as it can; the child does not laugh when entering the world, but weeps; acknowledge then its sufferings and assist it! The less children can speak for themselves, with so much the more compassion will we speak for them that they may not lose their heavenly inheritance. For their sake their Lord became a child, and why should not they enjoy His salvation who were honored by being the first to suffer death for Him?

"And lastly the birth of our Lord has been announced with the words: '*Thou shalt call his name* JESUS, *for He shall save His people from their sins.*' (Matt. 1 : 21.) The child is thus carried to the church to be made a Christian, to be baptized, and this certainly for the reason that it may be numbered among the people of Jesus. Of what Jesus? Of Him who saves His people from their sins. If the child has nothing to be saved from, then carry it away again. Christ is the Saviour; if there is nothing to redeem in children, why do we not say to the mothers: 'Carry your children away from here!' The healthy are not in need of the physician, only the sick. But will any one dare to say in regard to children: 'Jesus belongs to me, and not to this child!' Do we not answer for the child's belief in Christ? Have we for the child another kind of baptism, a baptism without absolution? Certainly, if the child could speak for itself it would exclaim against such contradiction, and say: 'Give me the life of Christ; I died in Adam, give me the life of Christ!' Why will they praise the innocence of the child? They may find a Saviour, and not a flatterer. In such an important affair in regard to children, we ought indeed not to dispute, and thereby injure their welfare. Let the child be baptized, revived, and saved. 'As in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.' (1 Cor. 15 : 22.) There is no way whereby the child can enter life except through Adam, and there is also no way by which he can escape punishment in the next life, but through Christ. Why will you lock this only entrance? But was John, of whom we speak, also born in sin? You will only find a mortal born without sin, if you find one who was born without Adam; for it is written: '*As by one man sin entered into the world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned.*' (Rom. 5 : 12.) Make an exception in the case of John if you can; if you are able to separate him from the manner in which men are born, then that passage does not refer to him. He, whose will it was to remain free from sin, was born of a Virgin. Why shall I enumerate the merits of John? He saluted the Lord when in the womb of his mother, but he saluted Him whom he wished to be his Saviour. When the Lord came to his baptism, John, conscious of the common disease, said: '*I ought to be baptized by*

Thee.' (Matt 3 : 14.) The Lord had come to recommend humility also in baptism, and to institute the Sacrament. He submitted thus, when a man, to baptism, as He had submitted, when a child, to circumcision. To recommend it He took the remedy without being afflicted with the disease. But why would John have said: 'I ought to be baptized by Thee,' if he had been free from all evil, if there had been in him nothing to be cured, nothing to be purified? And what he was in need of, that he received; the Saviour redeemed His precursor."

BLESSED JOHN OF SPAIN.

(June 25.)

"Choosing a Confessor."

THE remains of this godly man were interred and venerated in a chapel built for that purpose in a Carthusian monastery not far from the lake of Geneva. His biographer says:

"John, by birth a Spaniard, was born in Almanceps, of honest parents. They endeavored to have their son well educated, and while yet a child he gave evidence of great talent, so much so, that he surpassed all his schoolmates in their various studies. He was but thirteen years of age when, animated by a wish to acquire greater knowledge than his native place afforded, he left his father's house in order to gratify his desire in a foreign country. With his companion he finally reached the city of Arles, on the Rhone. A few days after his arrival he mingled with the students of the place, and one of the professors perceiving the strange youth, whose appearance betokened good breeding and a cultivated mind, asked him who he was, and whence and for what purpose he had come to Arles. John told him that he was a Spaniard, and then gave his reason for having left his native country. The professor, admiring the courage, firmness, and zeal of the boy, promised to superintend his education, to assist him as much as possible, and also to influence one of the rich men of Arles to provide for his bodily wants.

"As it often happens in this life, John waited in vain for the promised assistance, and the money which he had brought from home being spent, he saw himself surrounded by trouble and embarrassments of all sorts, and, in fact, reduced to abject want. Divine Providence, no doubt, placed him in this painful position in order that he, who was designed to be charged with the care of many, should himself first suffer, and learn thus from his own need how to treat those

who would one day be entrusted to his guardianship. It was God's will, however, to have him received into the family of a highly esteemed citizen, who provided amply for all his wants. He became such a favorite with the charitable man and his wife that they wished to adopt him as their son. He lived about two years with his benefactors, greatly respected and loved by all who knew him. At the end of that time he was called home by an order of the nobleman on whose estates his father lived, and his kind friends wept bitter tears when forced to part from him. Before starting on his journey, he called to see a very pious monk who was visited by many persons for the purpose of obtaining his advice as to their spiritual welfare. John confessed the sins of his life, and begged the priest to impose some severe penance upon him, especially as the season of Lent was near. It so happened that the exhortations of his holy confessor made such an impression upon him that he resolved to quit the world, and, like the monk, lead an austere and religious life. He entered with such zeal upon the discharge of his new duties that his health began to suffer, but with the help of God he soon regained his accustomed strength.

"After spending two years and a half with the good monk, leading a life pleasing in all things to both God and man, he heard of a Carthusian monastery whose members were greatly distinguished for their untiring zeal in all works of piety. He went thither, and declared his wish to join the brotherhood, who received him most kindly. The Prior soon became convinced of John's fidelity in observing the rules of the order, and of his exemplary conduct in other respects; he accordingly made him sacristan, and charged him with the whole management of the affairs of the church, which duties he performed in a modest and orderly manner for the space of six years, and in the seventh year he was elected Prior. In this position he made many improvements about the monastery; he caused parts of the building to be restored to their former beauty, adjusted many differences and reformed many abuses, besides paying great attention to the copying and illuminating of missals and books.

"But Satan, who detests all that is good, infused the poison of hatred against John into the heart of a certain person John did not fear for himself the persecutions of the wicked man, but the circumstances were such that he dreaded lest the pupils who had lately arrived might be injured, and thus suffer on his account; and mindful of that passage of Scripture which says: 'When they shall persecute you in this city, flee into another,' (Matt. 10 : 23,) he resigned the priorship, and left for Chartreux, the seat of the first monastery of the order. St. Anthelm, then Prior of Chartreux, welcomed John and his companions. Soon after the arrival of the new comers, St. Anthelm was one day conferring with the brothers as to the best manner of employing the strangers, when a message was received from a very wealthy and distinguished man by the name of Aymo, who owned large but chiefly uncultivated estates in Savoy. It was his desire that a Carthusian monastery should be erected upon a certain

portion of his demesnes, and that the brothers should cultivate the soil. The Prior regarded this offer as a special mark of the divine interest of God in the affairs of John and his friends; they were accordingly provided with the necessary clothes, books, and tools, after which they set off for their future home. The place where they finally settled is a deep valley situated between snow-crowned mountains; the climate is too cold for the growth of fruit-trees, and the soil is very poor. A brook flows through the place, and the dwelling-houses stand upon a small flat of ground. It was in the month of February when the travelers reached their destination. A laborious and austere life awaited them, and in the absence of all comfort, a piece of oaten bread was considered as a great delicacy among them. From that time the merits of Blessed John were acknowledged, and he enjoyed the love and respect of the monks. He built new dwellings, and began at once to cultivate the soil, and all of the lower and upper parts of the monastery, which are yet to be seen, were erected by him during his priorship. By his efforts and prudent management not only were new members added to the order, but its revenues were largely increased; the brothers, animated by his example, occupied themselves with copying religious books, and he himself has left us an admirably written history. It would be impossible for us to do adequate justice to the manner in which he treated those under his charge. He knew perfectly the character of each one of the brothers, and there was in him so much wisdom and kindness that he enriched those already rich in virtue, made perfect those who had not as yet attained perfection, infused new courage into those who had always been brave, and encouraged and strengthened the timid. He was himself watchful in prayer, severe in discipline, rigid in fasting, fearless in admonishing, but patient in suffering. In the ninth year of his office as Prior, and in the thirty-seventh year of his age, the Blessed John reached the end of his labors, and recommending his happy spirit to the Lord, he died in the year 1160."

The old manuscript from which we have made the above extracts, relates also some of the miracles which took place at the grave of the saintly Carthusian, and adds that his mortal remains were afterwards disinterred by a Bishop, a nephew of St. Francis of Sales, and exposed for the veneration of the faithful. There are scholars who study day and night, striving by this means to increase their knowledge, but if they have no higher aim than merely to become learned men, then is their zeal only a passion, and, like every other passion, it will lead them astray. John, in his youth, seems also to have been possessed with a great desire to acquire knowledge, and only after visiting the holy priest at Arles, did he give his whole heart to God. It often happens that by means of a good confessor persons are led to reform, and to lead truly Christian lives. It is, therefore, very necessary, dear reader, if you really wish to save your soul, to choose, as a confessor, one who possesses the knowledge, wisdom, and skill to guide your soul in its efforts to obtain heaven, and you should then

scrupulously follow the advice he gives you. How many sinners might have been saved if they had applied to a good confessor, but unfortunately the great majority of people prefer what they call an '*easy*' confessor, that is, a priest who is not strict, and who never refuses to absolve them. They prefer rather not to be disturbed in their blindness and false security, and are not really willing thoroughly to reform their lives; they forget that in choosing a confessor who is not strict, they but pronounce judgment upon themselves, and they remember not the words of the Lord: "If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit." (Matt. 15 : 14.)

ST. SALVIUS.

(June 26.)

"Paganism and Christianity."

In searching the records of the whole heathen world, how very few really virtuous men are found among the nations of which it was composed! What had then the appearance of, and was regarded as, virtue, was frequently the mere result or manifestation of pride or an innate good quality. Socrates, who lived four hundred years before Christ in Athens, is generally looked upon as the most noble of pagans. It is true, Socrates seems to have been an upright man who possessed much more wisdom than other pagans, and he believed also in but ONE God, whom he thought it necessary to serve by leading a virtuous life. When, on account of his belief, he was accused by his enemies, and sentenced to death, he submitted quietly to the sentence, and would not permit one of his disciples to speak in his defence, and even refused to escape from his prison from which another wished to deliver him. The enemies of Christianity, in order to disparage Christ, often refer to the death of Socrates, saying, Socrates died just as much for truth and justice as Christ. As a light, although very small, is visible at a great distance on a dark night, so does Socrates shine forth prominently in the darkness of the heathen world, because heathenism is night. We all know that in the clear light of day even a large fire does not shine very brightly, and, therefore, numberless persons who surpassed Socrates in virtue and holiness have not become so renowned, because they were Christians, and for the reason that they lived in the clear daylight of Christianity. Socrates was like a lonely spark that disappears without kindling a fire, for Socrates had not, like Christ, disciples who followed in his footsteps. We were induced to make these introductory remarks, because St. Salvius, whose feast

the Church to-day commemorates, evinced under similar circumstances the same courage and fearlessness of death that Socrates did. A cotemporary of the Saint writes thus of him:

"Some time before Charles the Great became the ruler of the great French empire, a Bishop, named Salvius, came to the city of Valenciennes, in the Netherlands, and began there to labor and preach. He was a pious man, dignified in appearance, and serene in countenance. Once, while on a journey, he perceived in the distance the church of St. Martin, and his eyes filled with tears; he looked up to heaven and spoke to his disciple and companion of the miracles and graces that had been accomplished and obtained through the intercession of St. Martin, and he told him that he desired to go with him to the church in order to implore the protection of the Saint.

"He went to the church, and spent the whole night praising God in hymns; and when the day appeared he put on his priestly vestments, for the people had assembled to hear the word of God proclaimed by the holy Bishop, whose fame had spread far and wide. After Salvius had finished his sermon, he celebrated High Mass, and bestowed his blessing upon the people. When the holy sacrifice was concluded, a man named Genard, the steward of the lord of that region, came, and begged Salvius most urgently, for the love of Christ, to take some refreshment in his house, and the Bishop consented. It was Sunday, and the son of the steward, Winegardis, was present at the dinner. Salvius had with him several precious church-vessels, not because he loved earthly pomp and pleasures, but that he might be enabled to celebrate the divine service, and perform the duties of his holy office in a becoming manner. When Winegardis saw the vessels, he was seized with a great desire to possess them, and he at once conceived a plan to rob the Saint of these treasures; he, therefore, watched the direction taken by the Bishop when he left the steward's house. Salvius, continuing his journey with his disciple, came to a brook flowing between pathless mountains, and leading to an abbey built in honor and for the veneration of the Mother of God. Here the crafty Winegardis, with his companions, was lying in wait for the holy Bishop, and when the latter approached he assumed a most reverential mien, and asked him whither he intended to go. 'To the abbey,' replied Salvius, 'if it is not against the will of God.'. Winegardis then said: 'I have built a church upon my estate, which is to be consecrated. Can you not come, and consecrate it?' But Salvius, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, was aware of the plot of Winegardis, and refusing to comply with his wish, he began to hasten forward. Then Winegardis ordered his servants to seize the Saint and his disciple, and to rob him of all he had in his possession. His order was obeyed, and he sent the golden chalice and patena, stolen from Salvius, to a goldsmith who was told to ornament a riding-saddle with the gold, for Winegardis was a very frivolous and wicked man, but the precious chasubles he sent to his own house, and ordered the Bishop to be kept imprisoned.

"Winegardis then hastened to his father, and told him how he had treated the servant of God. And the father said: 'What have you done! How could you so grievously offend the priest of God, who has shown us the path of truth and salvation! Why did you imprison him? Who advised you to commit such a wicked deed? As if the weight of our own sins were not heavy enough, you have now called the sins of our ancestors upon us, that they, too, may burden us to the third and fourth generation. See, his blood is upon us, and upon all our descendants.' Then said Winegardis: 'What shall I do, father? Shall I set him free or keep him imprisoned? Advise me what to do.' Then the steward replied: 'Your intention of killing the holy man displeases me; but I tell you, if you send him off it will not comfort you, and if you kill him you will be guilty of murder.' Winegardis then left his father, conferred with his companions, and afterwards went to his residence, the entrance of which he had closed so that no one could enter. He sent at once for one of his servants, and ordered him to put Salvius and his disciple to death in their prison. When the servant entered the dungeon, he found the holy man praying, and when he perceived the unwavering courage with which the Saint awaited his death, he himself became alarmed, and in the oppression of his heart he thus addressed the Bishop: 'Man of God, I am in great distress,' and, encouraged by Salvius, he continued: 'I look upon you as an Angel of God; how great then is my misfortune that I am sent by my master to commit such a wicked deed. I will tell you what he has ordered me to do this very night. Listen to me, holy father, and follow my advice. Escape from this dungeon, accompanied by your disciple and me, for my master has commanded me to kill you both before the dawn of day.' 'My son,' said St. Salvius, 'I cannot believe what you tell me; your master has given you no such order, for he cannot think of committing such a crime.' Whereupon the servant, weeping bitterly, replied: 'O holy man, I call upon the God of heaven and earth as my witness that I have only told you the truth; hear me, and do as I tell you, so that you may escape with the assistance of God, and let me, wretched slave that I am, accompany you; you shall always find me ready to serve you.' 'My son,' answered Salvius, 'we are not permitted to avoid the rewards of Christ, but we must embrace them with unshaken faith.' 'O holy father,' said the servant, 'I know that Christ has a crown prepared for you, but in my distress of mind I know not what to do regarding the great crime my master has ordered me to commit; my heart is oppressed with excessive fear; I am completely in the power of my master—I am his slave. When he has thought me in the least negligent, he has punished me most cruelly, and threatened me with the rack; what then will he not do to me, if I now refuse to execute the criminal order he has given in regard to you; and if I obey him, then I fear that the punishment of God will fall upon me, that the earth will open and bury me alive, and that I shall go to hell without any time being given me to repent. And if I do not obey, than I shall not be able to escape from the

rage of my master.' 'My son,' replied Salvius, 'do not grieve or fear, for if your master has given you a commission you must obey his order, according to the apostolic words: 'Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.' (1 Pet. 2 : 18.) 'I have already told you, servant of the Most High,' answered the slave, 'that if you are willing to escape, I am ready to follow you; but if you refuse, then I must obey, and execute you and your companion. May the heavenly King and His Angels bear witness that I do it not willingly, but because, if I refuse, my master will put me also to death.' While he was still speaking, Winegardis sent for him, thinking that his order regarding the Saint had been already executed. When the servant appeared before his master, the latter asked him: 'Have you obeyed my order? Why did you remain so long in the dungeon?' And the slave replied: 'I pray that it may be the will of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to open the eyes of my master's heart, that he may see how worthy of being loved is that servant of God.' 'But then,' asked the master, 'what have you, wretched slave, been doing the whole night?' 'I pray you, my lord, not to be angry with your slave, but to listen to me,' said the servant; and having obtained permission to speak, he continued: 'You sent me, my lord, to execute your order, but when I opened the door of the dungeon, a great fear overcame me, and having entered the presence of the man of God, my spirit was greatly troubled, and I trembled with fright; I fell at his feet, and thought the earth would open and bury me alive.' Winegardis, greatly enraged, scoffed at him, and said to his friends: 'Truly, this faithless servant is as full of fear as a fox when chased by hounds. One of you shall accompany him to the magician whose useless words he has related to me. Perhaps he will then have the courage to execute my order;' and, turning to the servant, he continued: 'Once again I command you not to appear before me, until you have obeyed me; for I swear by the life of my father, if you do not put this magician and his companion to death, you shall receive the punishment you deserve.'

"The servant, accompanied by another man, returned to the dungeon; but when they came to the place where Salvius was fearlessly awaiting the crown of martyrdom, they hesitated. The holy Bishop was at that moment alone, and seated on a wooden stool. The man who had gone with the slave in order to encourage him, said: 'Why do you hesitate? Why do you not obey your master?' The slave seized the axe, but he trembled violently, and dared not inflict the fatal blow.

"St. Salvius then said: 'Why do you delay, my son? Do as your master has commanded,' and, saying this, he bared his neck, and bent forward; and the slave, fearing the wrath of his master, struck the holy Bishop upon the head, killing him instantly. At that moment the disciple of St. Salvius was in another part of the dungeon, but hearing strange sounds, he knew that his master had been murdered, and he loudly exclaimed: 'Holy father, forsake me not!' And

they came also to him, and put him to death. Thus St. Salvius and his disciple suffered martyrdom on the 26th day of June; they yielded their bodies without resistance, and sacrificed their pure spirits to their Creator and Lord."

Although the bodies of the martyrs were secretly buried in a cattle-stall, the wicked deed was miraculously brought to light. By order of the Emperor Charles the Great the whole affair was investigated, and all the circumstances connected therewith having been discovered, Winegardis and his servant were both punished by having their eyes put out. We are told, however, that the latter, after frequently praying at the tomb of St. Salvius, regained the use of one of his eyes.

ST. LADISLAUS.

(June 27.)

"Generosity."

THERE stood in the garden of Paradise a forbidden tree, and this was the only object of temptation it contained for the first man and woman; nothing else was there that could tempt them to sin; but since the first sin was committed, and Paradise lost, we live in a perfect forest of forbidden trees, for the temptations, inviting us to sin, are innumerable and of various character. A temptation very frequently met with, and a most dangerous one, are those enemies who more or less embitter our life. St. Ladislaus, however, will show us how the Christian can overcome an enemy without falling into the sin of hatred.

King Bela, of Hungary, had two sons, Geyza and Ladislaus. After the death of Bela, Salomon, a nephew of the deceased king, claimed the throne of Hungary, and although younger than Geyza, the latter and his brother Ladislaus were induced by Bishop Desiderius to renounce the royal dignity in favor of Salomon. Afterwards, when the savage Huns, with Osal as their leader, invaded Hungary, Geyza and Ladislaus defended the country with the greatest bravery, and succeeded in conquering the enemy. In the history of this war we find recorded a most beautiful action of Ladislaus.

At the beginning of the battle he had already slain four of the enemy, but attacked by a fifth he was dangerously wounded. Just at this moment he saw a horseman seize a Hungarian maiden, place her on his horse, and hasten away with her. Ladislaus would dare everything to save the maiden from being destroyed, but his wound prevented him from reaching the flying enemy. He called, therefore, to the maiden to throw herself with the

horseman from the horse. She did so, and it was then in the power of Ladislaus to kill his prostrate foe; but his noble and chivalrous mind revolted at the thought, and having dismounted himself, he slew his enemy in combat.

A few years only had passed when Salomon acted in such a manner that Geyza and Ladislaus no longer considered themselves safe in the country. Salomon attacked Geyza, and put him to flight; and Ladislaus had meanwhile gone to Bohemia to call upon the duke of that country, his brother-in-law, for assistance. On their march into Hungary with their army they met with Geyza, and Ladislaus exhorted his brother not to lose courage, to be patient and valiant, to trust in God with whom was all power, and who would judge justly. Both armies met in battle near a forest, and through the bravery of Ladislaus especially, Salomon was defeated, and barely saved his life by flight.

Ladislaus burst into bitter tears at the sight of the many dead, who lay slain on the field of battle, all of whom had been brothers in Christ, and by his order they were buried in an honorable manner. He had promised to built a church in honor of St. Martin, and he now fulfilled his promise, and endowed the new church with large revenues, in order to have masses always said there for the souls of those who had fallen on the field.

Hungary at that time (in the eleventh century) was an elective monarchy, and, therefore, the two victorious brothers, although able to take possession of the throne without resistance, gave the Hungarians entire liberty to elect a king. They chose Geyza; his honesty and conscientiousness, however, was so great that he entered into negotiations with Salomon, who had been driven from the country, with the intention of abdicating the throne, but he died before they were brought to an end. The Hungarians then assembled to elect a new ruler, and as they had no longer any confidence in Salomon and his promises, they chose Ladislaus as their king. A history of Hungary says concerning the the election of Ladislaus: 'The people weighed in their minds the man's love of justice, his kindness, wisdom, bravery, greatness of soul, physical strength, truthfulness, unwavering faithfulness in word and deed, benevolence, and, most especially, his piety; they knew that he estimated not the happiness of this world, that he was not the slave of ambition and wicked passions, but that he was in the highest degree chaste, and despised all worldly honors. They had also not forgotten his heroic deeds, and great munificence and generosity. His countrymen almost universally called him the defender and protector of chastity, the refuge of the distressed, the model of piety, and the liberator of his country. The poor whom he had saved from misery, the oppressed who had been relieved by his assistance, the virgins whom he had portioned with dowries, the emigrants who enjoyed his protection, men and women of all ranks of society to whom he had been a benefactor, hastened to vote for him. They were also influenced by his majestic appearance, and his great personal beauty; he was taller than his

countrymen, and as a judge was so moderate, that they regarded him not less just than clement.

Ladislaus was unanimously chosen, and saluted as king, but his noble and Christian mind also manifested itself on this occasion. In spite of all request he refused to be crowned, but charged himself only with the management of the kingdom; for he still hoped to become reconciled to Salomon, and then remit to him the royal power. Convinced that a truly Christian people are the only happy people, he henceforth used his power to promote as much as possible the growth of religion and piety in Hungary.

It was the wish of Ladislaus to recall to the throne his cousin Salomon; but the most eminent men of the kingdom, priests as well as laymen, declared peremptorily that they would not submit to the odious and passionate Salomon, and expose themselves to his revengeful temper. Ladislaus then provided him with large revenues, and Salomon declared himself satisfied. Some time after, Salomon begged Ladislaus to grant him an interview for the purpose of finally ratifying their reconciliation. The king was willing to meet him on the appointed day, when he was providentially warned by a secret messenger that it was Salomon's intention to take his life. Ladislaus knew well that it was not only his duty as a man and as a Christian to preserve his life, but that with the loss of the peace and welfare of Hungary would be endangered. He, therefore, went to the place of meeting accompanied by a larger escort then Salomon had expected, thus preventing his treacherous design. Salomon was so enraged at the frustration of his plan that he attempted to put an end to his life, and was only prevented from doing so by the guard; but while Ladislaus kept the culprit imprisoned, in order to prevent him from doing further mischief, he prayed incessantly that God would change his heart for the better, and he would have willingly yielded the crown to him, if he had not feared to cause confusion and harm to the people. Ladislaus, guided by religious motives, once more released his enemy, and even received him kindly at his royal court, in order to change his wicked mind by showing mercy and forgiveness, but in vain. Salomon suddenly left the palace, and at once commenced to revenge himself. As he could not expect to find assistance in Christian countries, he called for aid upon the king of the Huns, promising him, if he would assist him in regaining the Hungarian throne, to give him a part of Hungary, and also his daughter in marriage. He succeeded in his designs, and then marched with a large army against Hungary. Ladislaus also collected an army, but he could scarcely believe that Salomon had united himself with a heathen king. A battle was fought, and Ladislaus won such a complete victory that ten thousand Huns were killed, while the Hungarians lost but comparatively few. The king of the Huns and Salomon escaped, and Ladislaus returned with immense spoils, and had solemn thanks offered up in all the churches. Although it is said that Salomon henceforth retired to a forest, where he lived up to the time of his death, doing

penance, it is certain that the Huns again invaded Hungary. Ladislaus, in order to prevent further bloodshed, succeeded in meeting their king in the battle, and slew him in single combat, on which the Huns fled from the field in great confusion. Ladislaus then marched against the Ruthens, who had instigated and assisted the Huns against the Hungarians. But they justly thought that it would be better for them to submit to Ladislaus at once, and they, therefore, appeared before him frankly confessing their guilt, and promising to obey him in all things. Ladislaus forgave them, and thus, by kindness, turned his enemies into submissive and devoted subjects.

Nothing is more apt to turn a man from the path of virtue than such a life as Ladislaus was obliged to lead. And yet we are told that his palace resembled a convent more than a royal court, so strictly religious was his life. He was almost daily present at Holy Mass, he daily gave audience to all who wished to see him, and treated all with such kindness that they regarded him as a father. His manner of living was most austere; he fasted several times a week, never tasted wine, and slept upon a hard couch, and as often as he went to war, he ordered a fast and public prayers to be said for three days, and he himself spent whole hours at the foot of the altar.

At that time, by command of Pope Urban II., a crusade was preached and resolved upon, in order to wrest the Holy Land from the possession of the Saracens. The Princes of Europe were unanimously of the opinion that they could choose no more worthy leader than the truly Christian hero, Ladislaus of Hungary. The imperial crown of Germany had been offered him, but Ladislaus had no desire for greater honor and power, and yet the offer to undertake a difficult and dangerous crusade was gladly accepted by him; for no one could be more ready to sacrifice his life for the cause of Christ than Ladislaus. But such was not the will of God, and He called him from this world of trouble and distress to dwell forever in the empire of eternal peace.

To meet with injury, to be wronged, to suffer from injustice and falsehood are daily occurrences. The poor man grieves as much at being defrauded of the little he has, as the king does if deprived of his throne; but let the Christian reader imitate in such cases the noble mind and the Christian generosity of King Ladislaus.

Although it may be necessary to prosecute your enemy at law, watch that the Christian love you should feel for him does not leave your heart. He may live to repent as did Salomon, the enemy of Ladislaus; therefore neither reproach nor condemn him, but pray for him. A law-suit is often won, but an infinitely greater good is thereby lost—we mean the salvation of a soul, lost by harboring sentiments of hatred or by exhibiting a manner hostile to our enemy.

ST. IRENÆUS.

(June 28.)

"Tradition"

St. Irenæus was one of the most celebrated Fathers of the Church, some of whom, as St. Cyril, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Basil, praise the holiness of his life, and the excellence of his writings. Asia Minor seems to have been his native country; for while yet a young man, he knew and revered St. Polycarp. Lyons was, however, the city in which he labored for the cause of God, where he became a priest, and later Bishop of Lyons, at that time (second century) the spiritual head of all the Christians in France. When Irenæus entered upon the duties of his holy office, many of the inhabitants of that city were still heathens, but his teaching was so blessed and effective, that most of them were gained over to Christ. To this beneficial result may have contributed also the miracles that, as Irenæus himself asserts, were at that time quite frequently worked by the true disciples of the Lord.

As Satan, by entering Paradise, tempted Adam and Eve to sin, in like manner he has endeavored from the very foundation of the Catholic Church to tempt her children from their faith. In the primitive days of Christianity there were those who insisted in placing their own constructions upon the Bible, and thus cut themselves off from the universal and Apostolic Church, the pillar and the ground of truth. St. Irenæus fought bravely with the power of his word and writings against these heretics; but although he hated heresy, he loved those who had been led astray; he said: "We pray with our whole heart for their return; for we have a greater desire for their salvation than they have themselves. Our love appears rough and severe to them, because it presses their wounds so as to free them from the poison of pride and vanity with which they were swollen." In the celebrated work written by St. Irenæus against heresies (a Latin translation of which has come down to us), he also proves that apostacy from the one true Church is always the consequence of relying on the Scriptures as the only rule of faith, and interpreting them according to our own opinion and pleasure, and of refusing to believe in the traditions of the Apostles, which existed before the Bible, and which with the Bible are still preserved and used in the Catholic Church; Protestants, nevertheless, reject tradition, and pretend to draw all Christian truths from the Bible alone. Let us hear what St. Irenæus has to say on this subject; for a man, who, on account of his holiness and great learning, enjoyed even the high regard of the martyrs, who was himself a Bishop of the Church, and who even knew the disciples of the Apostles, must indeed know the doctrines and will of Christ and the Apostles better than all the Protestant scholars and preachers in the world. He says in his book (Chap. 3 : 3, 4.): "Every one who wishes to know the truth, may find the tra-

ditions of the Apostles in every church, and I am able to enumerate the Bishops appointed by the Apostles in the churches, and their successors up to our time. But in order not be prolix, I cite only the Bishops of that Church which is the most ancient, greatest, and best known, and which was founded in Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul; every other church, that is to say all the faithful, must apply to this Church on account of her greater pre-eminence, for in this Church has been always preserved the doctrine as handed down by the Apostles. The holy Apostles charged Linus with the management and supervision of the Church; of this Linus St. Paul makes mention in his Epistles to Timothy. He was succeeded by Anacletus; as third after the Apostles came Clement, who was personally acquainted with the holy Apostles, with whom he had intercourse, and whose preaching was still fresh in his mind, and whose tradition he had before his eyes, and, in fact, he was not the only one; for many lived still at that time who had been instructed by the Apostles. Clement was succeeded by Evaristus, Alexander, Sixtus, Telesphorus, Hyginus, and Pius, and at present, Eleutherius is the twelfth Bishop after the Apostles. Through this order and succession the tradition of the Apostles in the Church, and the dispensation of truth has come down to us. And this is the most perfect proof that the only life-giving faith is that which was preserved, and truthfully taught in the Church from the time of the Apostles down to the present day. Therefore, if there is dissension in regard to any doctrine we have only to apply to the oldest churches, where the Apostles have taught, to have them decide what is certain and true; for the Apostles deposited in those churches, as in a magazine, all truth, so that all who are willing may draw therefrom the water of life.

"To this tradition adhere also many barbarous nations who believe in Christ, whose salvation is written without the use of paper and ink, but by the Spirit in their hearts, who carefully preserve the old tradition, and believe in ONE God, the Creator of all things, through Christ Jesus."

Whenever Irenæus speaks of the unanimous belief of the Church, he by no means derives this unanimity from the Bible, but from tradition. He says, (I. 10:) "The Church, although scattered over the whole earth, preserves this teaching and this faith as carefully as if she inhabited but one house; she believes in them, as if she had but one soul and one heart, and she proclaims, teaches, and relates them with as much unanimity as if she had but one mouth; for although there are different languages on earth, yet tradition is one and the same in all languages, and the churches established in Germany, France, Spain, in the East, in Egypt, Lybia, Jerusalem, and Palestine, believe and teach one and the same. As the sun, created by God, is one and the same in the whole universe, thus also the proclamation of truth shines everywhere, and enlightens all who are willing to obtain the knowledge of truth. The most eloquent preacher of the Church, and one who does not possess the gift of eloquence, will

both teach one and the same tradition; for, as it is one and the same faith, it is neither magnified by him who is able to speak well, nor diminished by him who is less able."

Irenæus then shows how all heretics, on the contrary, are continually changing and contradicting each other in their doctrine, because they do not adhere to the eternal truth of tradition. While Irenæus defended the Catholic Church with great zeal and skill against her enemies, he was not less zealous in preserving harmony and peace within the Church. For that purpose he wrote a work "On Schism;" for while Victor filled the chair of St. Peter, a controversy arose within the Catholic Church regarding the time for celebrating Easter. They all agreed that the time of this feast was to be fixed after the first full moon after the 21st of March; but in the East they always celebrated the feast on the very day of the full moon, so that Easter, like Christmas, might fall on any day of the week; in the West, however, it was already customary at that time, as it is still, to celebrate Easter on the Sunday following the full moon, so that every Sunday thus remains a remembrance of Easter-day. Pope Victor called upon the Eastern churches to follow the rule of the Roman Church, and as many refused to depart from their old custom, he threatened to excommunicate them, that is, to exclude them from the communion of the Roman Catholic Church. Although Irenæus submitted to the demand of the Holy See, he, nevertheless, wrote a letter to the Pope praying him not to act too hastily, and rather, for a while at least, permit a slight dissimilarity than to separate a large part of the Church from the rest. St. Irenæus was successful in his efforts to preserve peace within the Church, and thus the name of this Saint (Irenæus), signifying in Greek "PEACE," was worthily borne by him.

A persecution of the Christians afterwards arose in the city of Lyons, during which, according to the report of St. Gregory of Tours, so many people were killed that the streets of the city resembled rivers of blood; another report speaks of nineteen thousand Christians, and among them Irenæus, who thus died for their faith. Lyons has still a church built in honor of St. Irenæus. The successor of St. Irenæus as Bishop of Lyons was Zachary. An old manuscript says, that while Irenæus was spending the night in prayer with Zachary, who was at that time a priest, an Angel appeared and charged him to save Zachary from the persecution, as he was designed to become his successor, and to strengthen the Christians in their faith; and it really came to pass that Zachary buried the mortal remains of the saintly martyr.

Who then acts the more wisely, those who, according to the instruction of this holy Bishop, adhere to the tradition of the Catholic Church, or those who ignore tradition, and, like Protestants, merely rely on the Bible? That the Bible alone will not lead to certain truth is already shown, because the different sects that have separated from the Catholic Church all contradict each other, and yet each of them pretends to have derived its peculiar belief from the Bible.

Christ did not instruct His Apostles TO WRITE, but rather TO TEACH BY WORD OF MOUTH, and He did not instruct man TO READ, but rather TO HEAR what is preached by the Apostles and teachers of the Church.

BLESSED SALOME.

(June 29.)

"Jerusalem."

TO-DAY the Church celebrates the festival of SS. Peter and Paul, but inasmuch as we treat in another part of this work of that festival of these two glorious Apostles of Christ, we intend to speak of a Saint whose blessed memory is also commemorated to-day, but whose life is very little known to the Christian world.

Salome was a near relative of an English king, and her beauty was so great that, in the words of her biographer, "she had come as a master-piece, possessing a heavenly form, from the hands of the Most High, her body having but one defect, that of being mortal." Her bodily grace, however, was but the reflection of her most beautiful soul, adorned, as it was, with all virtues. She loved God truly with all her strength, and above all other things, and, therefore, had not the least desire to live in the world, especially such an indolent and luxurious life as is generally led at princely courts. She undoubtedly knew that even the most pious heart becomes gradually tepid and cold, if living long among frivolous and worldly persons, and the noble and pious virgin, looking, as she did, upon all that the world eagerly seeks and loves as vain, troublesome, and injurious, shrank from no effort to keep herself perfectly free from the uncleanness of the world. After long and mature considerations she finally resolved to leave her home and country.

Salome had two faithful maid-servants who shared the sentiments of their mistress, and, therefore, took the greatest interest in all her good works. They saw that the princess was for some time more than usually given to meditation, and they implored her to tell them what she had at heart. Salome yielded to their entreaties, and, having received their solemn promise to keep secret what she would impart to them, she acquainted them with her resolution, and the reasons that had induced her to take it. The pious hearts of the two maidens were most deeply touched by hearing their mistress speak with such fervor of her love for God and contempt of the world, and animated and ennobled by the pure and lofty enthusiasm of Salome, they declared themselves ready to accompany her, and from that time became instead of the servants the intimate friends

and sisters of the holy princess. Having provided themselves with plain dresses, they set out privately in order not to be prevented from carrying out their intention. A race more vigorous than ours seems to have lived at that time (the ninth century), for women performed deeds which many men of our day would lack courage to accomplish. Salome, with her two companions, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to visit the holy sepulchre. At no time has a journey thither been attended with fewer difficulties than at present, and yet many trials and dangers must even now be undergone before the Holy Land is reached. Imagine, therefore, the hardships and difficulties attending a journey to Jerusalem at that time, and yet they were overcome by these three defenceless maidens. Guided and protected by their guardian Angels, they finally reached the summit of the last mountain, whence they could see the end of their long and toilsome wandering—Jerusalem.

The impression which the sight of the Holy City makes upon the hearts of those who for the first time approach it, is wonderful. Many a pilgrim, when within sight of the city, has fallen on his knees, and with streaming eyes has kissed the earth; but what must have been his sensations when he was enabled to visit, examine, and touch the places, where our Saviour lived and suffered, where He died and rose again from the dead! Millions of Christians would regard it as the greatest happiness they could enjoy, if once during their lives they could pray on the mount of Olives, on Calvary, and near the Holy Sepulchre. We are told that a knight, who had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, was so overcome by his feelings, when he came thither, that he yielded up his spirit. How then must those pious virgins have felt when they reached the most holy places upon earth?

Is it not the desire of your heart, dear reader, to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem? Perhaps you would regard yourself as most happy if you were permitted to do so; but the want of means and time, with many other circumstances, prevent you from fulfilling your wish. But we can show you a place much more holy than Jerusalem, whither you are able to go without spending money or much time, without undergoing danger or much trouble. There you will find not merely the excavation in the rock, where the cross of Christ stood, and the empty tomb wherein He once lay, but where His real body and blood are yet to be found;—do you detect our meaning? It is not the sepulchre of the Lord, but it is the table of the Lord. In every worthy communion you will, indeed, find more than you would in all the places of the Holy Land. Prepare yourself worthily, and often make a pilgrimage to your Saviour who, with His flesh and blood, with His body and soul, as God and man, is present in the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. The oftener you make the pilgrimage to the Lord, thus becoming more and more sanctified, the more surely will you hereafter enter the new Jerusalem, of which the Revelation of St. John says: "And he took me up in spirit to a great and high mountain; and he showed me the

holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; and the light thereof like unto a precious stone, as it were to a jasper-stone, as crystal. And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, one to each; and every several gate was of one several pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein. For the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof, and the Lamb. And the city had no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it. For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof. And the nations shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates thereof shall not be shut by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. There shall not enter into it anything defiled, or any one that worketh abomination, or a lie; but they who are written in the book of life of the Lamb.

"And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God, and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street thereof, and on both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations. And no curse shall be any more: but the throne of God, and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face: and his name shall be on their foreheads, and they shall reign forever and ever." (Apoc. 21:10, 11, 21–27; 22:1–6.)

Salome and her companions visited all the places in Jerusalem which had been sanctified through the presence, and by the passion of Christ, praying there most fervently: and they wandered also to Bethlehem and Nazareth, the places where the Lord had been announced, conceived, and born. After they had satisfied the pious longing of their hearts, they set out upon their return home. Salome, by this pilgrimage had laid the foundation of her holy life; her soul henceforth, during her whole life upon earth, was to live upon, and be strengthened by the remembrance of the holy places she had visited.

One of the streets of Jerusalem is called the VIA DOLOROSA (the street of sorrows), because it was the road through which Christ bore His cross from the court of Pilate to Calvary, and there is no doubt but that Salome, when in Jerusalem, made the stations over that road with a heart filled with both love and sorrow. But henceforth it was designed for her to follow the Lord also in another manner on the *via dolorosa*—she was to be visited with great afflictions, making her life a real *via dolorosa*. Death bereft her of her two faithful friends and companions, after she had left the Holy City, but this misfortune did not shake her firm resolution never to return to the royal court of England, but to live solely for God in poverty and seclusion. On her return from Jerusalem, she had proceeded as far as Bavaria, when she found a lodging in a country-house not far from Ratisbonne. A young soldier, who was in the same house,

complimented the strange maiden upon her beauty. Salome, instead of being pleased with the flattery, as is generally the case with worldly women, felt greatly ashamed and grieved, and as soon as she found herself unobserved, left the house where she had found shelter. She came to a meadow, and as no one seemed to be near, she fell on her knees, and, bursting into tears, implored God to deprive her of her beauty that she might not again be a cause of temptation to sin; and as God often grants more than what is prayed for, so He did with this virgin, who had already reached such a high degree of Christian perfection, that suffering was to her as a dear remembrance of the crucified Saviour, and the greater her sufferings, the more dear and agreeable were they to her. She lost her eyesight, and while wandering about without a guide, she fell into the river Danube. Fortunately two fishermen had observed it, but she was already insensible when the men rescued her from drowning. She was carried to a place where they had kindled a fire, and after many efforts she was restored to life—but only to undergo greater trials.

The poor blind maiden was attacked with the terrible disease of leprosy, but the disease had not yet entirely developed itself when some persons, touched by her wretched condition, procured her a passage on a boat as far as Passaw, where she was set ashore. There she wandered about, and was supported by the charitable gifts of a few good persons.

Salome was once passing through the grounds of a woman of rank, named Heika, and in her blindness stumbled against the kennel where the dogs were just feeding. They did not attack her, and did not even bark at her; but Salome was very much frightened, and called for help. She was then led into the presence of Heika, who received her kindly, and kept her in her house for three years.

Salome, while living with her kind protectress, did not lead a life of comfort as her benefactress desired, but one of great austerity and self-denial. Every evening she went to a church, and remained there until dawn, and this she did even in the most bitter cold of winter. Heika spoke to the Abbott of Alteich, a relative of hers, concerning the pious maiden, and the latter, wishing to procure Salome a lasting asylum, had a cell built for her near the wall of the choir of the monastery. There she henceforth lived in peace and quiet, after having been for a long time tossed about in the world; her whole time was spent in pious exercises, and in preparing herself for a life of everlasting happiness.

After Salome had secretly left England, her uncle, the king, thought that she had escaped with a lover, and, therefore had the whole country searched for her. Finally they discovered the rich dresses formerly worn by the princess, and they then justly supposed that Salome, as was often the case at that time, had left the country inspired by religious motives. Judith, the king's daughter, then set out in search of her beloved cousin, accompanied by a large retinue.

After traveling about for a long time, she at last discovered the abode of the pious Salome, and with a heart full of joy she again embraced her long sought and beloved relative. Judith at first intended to take Salome back to England, but as the strong cannot be conquered by the weak, but the weak must submit to the strong, Judith, the princess of England, entreated the Abbot to build a cell for her by the side of Salome's, in order that she might lead the same life. The two princesses were henceforth no longer mere relatives, but twin-sisters in faith and spirit.

Salome was blessed with the most wonderful grace of having her sight restored to her on every festival of the Blessed Mother of God, but not to behold what belonged to the earth, but to see the Lord Jesus Christ in His divine and unspeakable beauty, and when she at last yielded up her spirit, she entered upon a holiday that never ceases, and beheld a light that never dies. Any one who reads the life of this noble virgin, so many centuries after her death, cannot but love her, and rejoice in her eternal happiness. And how unspeakably great must have been the grace and kindness with which God, the very essence of love, received this pure and faithful soul! How He must have rejoiced in being rich enough to reward the afflictions and trials of His blessed daughter with the great and infinite joys of heaven! After the death of blessed Salome, bright lights were frequently seen at night in the cell where she had lived and was buried, as though Angels visited the cell, and wished to glorify with light the place where the blind virgin had served God.

ST. ARNULF.

(June 30.)

"Advantage of Youth.

St. Arnulf, whose parents belonged to the middle class of society, spent his youth in the city of Brussels, sunk in every species of dissipation. Although the good Shepherd goes in search of the sinner, and tries to lead him back to the right path, there are many who refuse to listen to His call. The grace of God knocked at the door of St. Arnulf's heart, and he was not deaf, but hearkened to the sounds of the divine voice. He confessed his sins, cast off the old man with his works, and put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in righteousness and holiness. As Arnulf, when living in the world, had existed only for its pleasures, so, after his conversion, he lived only for God. He renounced all intercourse with his former companions, and sought only the company of the truly pious. As often as he could, he heard Mass, and sometimes,

when he awoke too late, and the matins had already begun, he did not enter the church, but punished himself by standing under the gutter when it rained.

Thus Arnulf lived piously in the world for about two years, guarding himself carefully against sin; but dreading a relapse into his former frivolous course, he resolved to enter the Cistercian order. He left friends and home, taking with him, as his biographer says, two companions: THE FEAR OF THE LORD and THE HOPE OF FORGIVENESS, and at his own request, was received into the brotherhood of the abbey of Villar.

Although the rule of this order is one of the most rigid, it did not appear so to the pious zeal of Arnulf. He imposed upon himself many other painful penances beside those enjoined by the rule; thus, for instance, he scourged himself daily, Sundays and festivals excepted, with a branch of nettle, until the blood ran down his back, and sometimes he would roll naked upon a bed made of the branches and leaves of nettles. Once, while scourging himself, a monk, who wished to see him, asked the doorkeeper where he could find Arnulf, and received the answer, "in purgatory." He was sent for, and quickly put on his habit, but the blood was streaming from under it. The monk could not help weeping at this sight, and said: "Dear brother, you are killing yourself!" Whereupon Arnulf replied: "I do not kill myself, but only my sins." Upon another occasion some one who had seen that he had given himself in his cell more than a thousand lashes, exhorted him to be more moderate in his mortifications, but Arnulf replied: "My flesh is an enemy against whom I must guard myself the more, because it is so very near me; it is necessary that I should torment and strike the animal of my flesh, in order to prevent it from becoming voluptuous, and dragging me into the abyss of everlasting death."

Arnulf was continually inventing new tortures for his body. Thus his bed was made up of stones and wood, a large stone serving him as a pillow, the whole covered with a sack to conceal it from the eyes of others. For several years he only ate vegetables that had been cooked for several days, and which were no longer fit to be used as food. Sometimes, when he was very thirsty, he would raise a cup, filled with water, to his lips, not to quench his thirst, but to increase his longing for water, and thus overcome his desire.

Rigid and self-denying as was Arnulf towards himself, he was kind and charitable towards others. He willingly gave the alms of his prayers, and the merits of his penances to every one who asked him for them, and he especially offered up the most terrible mortifications, which he daily imposed upon himself during Lent, for his brothers and friends. He said also that he would gladly consent to be sold as a slave to the Saracens, or to be torn into pieces, if thereby the poor could be assisted, and sinners be brought back to God.

The virtues of humility, patience, and meekness, must have been uncommonly great in a man so visibly blessed with divine grace. Once he begged and obtained permission of the Abbot to distribute a large quantity of bread

among the poor. He was seen distributing the bread, and accused of having done so without permission. When called before the chapter, he submitted to the punishment rather than disgrace his accusers, and he said nothing of the permission given him by the Abbot. He was punished with being kept for eleven days in a cell situated between the two entrances of the convent, so that every one who entered or left the convent could see the offender; but he bore the punishment cheerfully. His virtue of obedience was so great towards his superiors and brothers that he would even interrupt his prayers and meditations when called by any of them, and thus left the Lord for the sake of the Lord.

The biographer of St. Arnulf knew him personally, and he gives us a minute report of the miraculous effects produced by the prayers of this Saint. The more pure, holy, and pious a soul is, the more certainly will its prayers be heard before the throne of God; and we may, therefore, truthfully say that there is no one more powerful on earth than is a Saint. His biographer relates: "A widow lady, the Countess Bianca of Campania, was greatly troubled by the conduct of a certain knight who claimed her estates, and who robbed and destroyed her villages with fire and sword, so that she knew not what to do to resist him. In her helplessness she asked a monk, a relative of hers, if he knew any one who, by his prayers, could assist her in her distress. The monk replied: "I know a lay-brother in the convent of Villar, in Brabant, named Arnulf, who is able to procure you divine assistance by his prayers." The Countess, full of confidence, then sent the monk, after having obtained the permission of his Abbot, to the convent of Villar, and having acquainted Arnulf with the request of the lady, the monk said: 'Dear brother, I am obliged to visit the city of Louvain; pray then, so that when I return you may tell me what the countess may hope for.' Arnulf did as the countess desired, and while praying with great fervor, he had a wonderful vision. He saw a white hen with chickens of the same color following their dam, and warming themselves under her wings. Arnulf knew not what this vision meant, and entreated the Lord to enlighten him. And it was revealed to him that the countess should found a convent, the white hen with her chickens indicating the Abbess with her nuns. When the monk returned, and asked Arnulf what answer he should take to the countess, the latter said: 'Go in peace, and tell the countess, if she firmly resolves to found a convent for Cistercian nuns, she will no longer be troubled, but will henceforth live in peace.' The countess greatly rejoiced at Arnulf's message, and immediately upon its reception made preparations to found a convent which she endowed with large revenues. The prediction of Arnulf was fulfilled, and the knight desisted from his hostilities.

Flesh and blood exercise a stupifying influence on the souls of worldly persons; but when the body has been mortified for years by watching and fasting, and the spirit has been kindled by contemplation and prayer to a heaven-soaring flame, the eyes of such a spirit sometimes see even during this life things only

seen by those who inhabit the realms of bliss. Such a spirit was that of Arnulf, and such things were seen by him. Once, while praying, he felt wearied of life and its wretchedness; he began to be entirely unconscious of all around him, and longed to be with the Saints in heaven, and, if possible, to see the Creator face to face. The full brightness of divine grace shone into his heart; his soul, filled with admiration of heavenly beauty, was animated with so great an enthusiasm of love, and so bewildered with surprise, that he no longer felt the fetters of his mortal body, and his spirit rose to a celestial height. While thus the rich dew of heavenly grace descended upon him, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared, and gazing at him with a countenance full of kindness, said: "What dost thou demand of me, my son; what favor dost thou wish me to grant thee?" Arnulf saw that He was the Lord and Saviour, and replied: "Lord, Thou knowest my desire." And the Lord said: "Dost thou not deem it sufficient that for thy sake I assumed flesh, for thy sake suffered shame, contempt, blows, scourging, pains caused by the crown of thorns, and the wounds made by the nails, and to increase the indignity, was crucified naked? Where, conquering death, I suffered myself to be conquered by death, to be counted among the criminals, and to be sentenced although I was innocent? Is all this not sufficient for thee?" And Arnulf replied: "No, dear Lord,"—not that he thought for an instant of denying that the Passion of the Lord was sufficient to save him and the whole world; but he only showed thereby the great longing of his heart to behold the most blessed and holy Trinity, and, therefore, he added: "Thou knowest, dear Lord, what I desire."

Then the Lord shone with the bright rays of His grace into the heart of Arnulf, saying: "Look upward, and behold the wonderful things that I will show thee," and when Arnulf looked up, the heavens were opened before him, and as far as it is in the power of man to see, of man, whose spirit is still imprisoned in a mortal body, he beheld all the choirs of the Saints, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, and monks, and also the choirs of the Angels; he saw distinctly and clearly all their hosts shining with unspeakable brightness. He was filled with admiration of all this glory, but his spirit was not yet at rest. And the Lord said to him: "My son, is this enough for thee, or dost thou desire to ascend still higher?" When Arnulf replied that he was not yet satisfied, the Lord said: "Lift up thine eyes, and behold my glorious Mother, whom I shall show thee;"—and looking upward he saw the powerful Queen of Heaven elevated above the choirs of Angels. The human mind can neither imagine nor comprehend the sublimity of her beauty, nor the fullness of her glory; and yet while absorbed in the contemplation of her majesty, his heart being wonderfully touched by it, he nevertheless felt that his spirit was not yet perfectly content.

And the Lord spoke again, saying: "Art thou satisfied with what thou hast seen, or dost thou wish to see what is still higher?" And when Arnulf de-

clared that in all he had seen he had not yet found what he desired, then the Lord regarded his holy firmness and great longing, and said: "My son, ascend higher, and in the measure I mete out to thee my grace, shalt thou understand the wonderful height of my majesty, and the unspeakable joys of my glory." And then it appeared to Arnulf as if he was lost in the mysterious depth of the divine light. He beheld as far as sight could reach the triune God; he saw the inexpressible treasures of His glory which to abide in, enjoy, and possess forever, is life eternal. Here he found lasting comfort, true peace, and joy.

When he had beheld this, the Lord said to him: "My son, thou hast seen my glory, and rejoiced in it; but I tell thee that if the leaves of all the trees, and every drop of the oceans should come as men to my kingdom, with all my Saints, I tell thee that the fullness of my wonderful glory would suffice for all of them." And the Lord Jesus having spoken thus, was no longer seen by his servant Arnulf, and the blessed vision ceased.

We will pass over many other incidents by which his holiness was manifested, and how pleasing he was to God, and will only mention the fact of his appearing to a pious woman after his death. A youth clad in a garment, one part as white as snow, and the other as red as blood, was seen by a pious servant of Christ, and when she asked him why he appeared to her as a strangely-dressed youth, he replied: "My childlike figure indicates my having walked on earth like a child; the white color, the purity of my life, and the red, the long and painful mortification of my body;" and having said this, the vision disappeared.

Arnulf was but twenty years old when he reformed his life and turned to God, and looking over the records of all the Saints, we find that they either led a pious life from early youth, or were not old when they were converted, and zealously devoted themselves to the service of God. We know of no Saint who delayed until he had grown old, and then began to lead a pious life; not that we mean to assert that it is impossible at any stage of life to become a Saint, but it is certain THAT THE LONGER MAN DELAYS, AND THE OLDER HE GROWS, THE MORE IMPROBABLE IT IS THAT HE WILL EVER BEGIN TO LEAD A HOLY LIFE. The Saviour resuscitated a child, a youth, and a man, but nowhere do we read that He ever resuscitated the old. This may indicate what period of life is best adapted for a spiritual resuscitation, and it shows plainly that it is the age of youth.

Therefore, dear reader, if you are still young, delay not to labor earnestly for the salvation of your soul, as your efforts at this period of life will be easily crowned with success. If you have attained the years of manhood, you have reached the meridian of your strength, then it is already summer, and time earnestly to work without looking backward; but if you are advanced in years, and have not yet commenced to lead a truly Christian life, then, indeed, will it be difficult for you to become what is called a Saint; your soul has no longer that courage, strength, and flexibility necessary to lead a life pleasing in the eyes of

God. Nevertheless, although the day is far spent, despair not; as long as man lives on earth, God will accept his conversion, and those who are lost forever, would regard themselves as infinitely happy, could they still make use of *one* of the years granted you. Beg of God daily the salvation of your soul, and try to extricate yourself voluntarily from worldliness and the world, before death tears you forcibly away from it; direct your thoughts as much as possible to God, and, when worthily prepared, often approach Holy Sacraments, and live quietly and patiently until the Lord shall call you; for it is an inexpressible happiness to be numbered even among the least in the kingdom of heaven.

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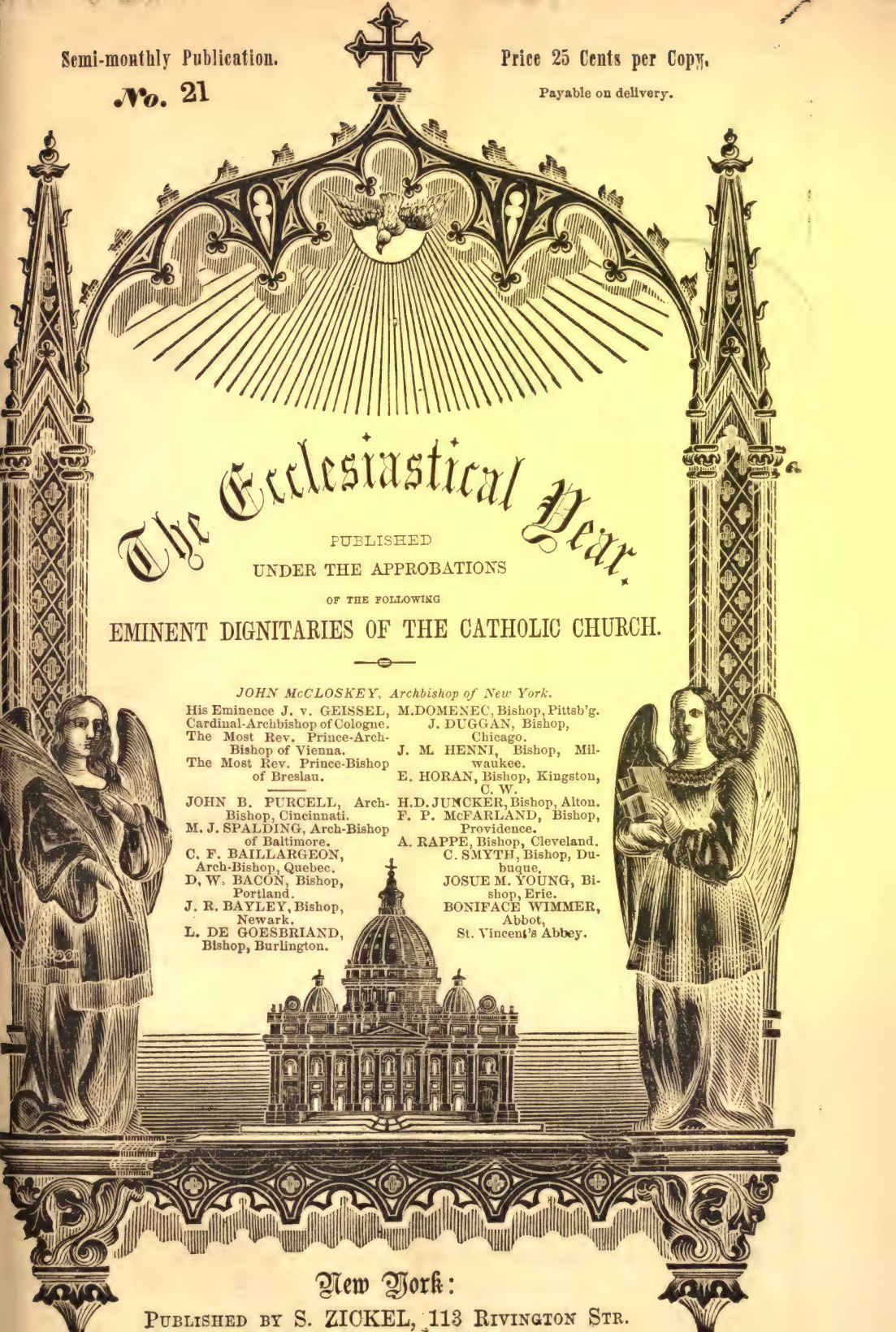
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THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

PENTECOST-CYCLE CONTINUED.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 27.

"The Lord is the strength of his people, the protector of the salvation of his anointed. Save, O Lord, thy people, and bless thy inheritance, and rule them forever. Unto thee will I cry, O my God: be not thou silent to me, lest I become like unto them that go down into the pit." Glory be to the Father.

These words, like those of the Introit of last Sunday, contain the fervent prayer of a just servant of God, and the Church, by repeating this prayer, reminds us that the Christian, as the follower and disciple of Christ, should, while living, faithfully and constantly walk in the narrow and thorny path of salvation, and have recourse to the Lord, that, strengthened by the divine assistance, he may overcome the manifold temptations and adversities of this life, and obtain eternal happiness.

PRAYER.

O God of hosts, to whom belongeth all that is best, infuse into our breasts the love of Thy name, and grant within us an increase of devotion, that Thou mayest nourish what is good, and by the pursuit of piety, preserve what Thou hast nourished. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Rom. 6:3—11.

"Brethren: We all, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death. For we are buried together with him by baptism unto death: that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk

in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and that we may serve sin no longer. For he that is dead is justified from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ: knowing that Christ, rising again from the dead, dieth no more, death shall no more have dominion over him. For in that he died to sin, he died once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. So do you also reckon that you are dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

In this Epistle the Church calls our attention to the fact that, by holy baptism, we are freed from our sins, sanctified, and thereby made partakers of the fruits of the redemption through Jesus Christ. As such, we should govern the evil inclinations remaining within us after baptism, crucify, as it were, our flesh, which is in opposition to our spirit, and in such manner mortify our sensual desires, that dying with Christ to sin, and living with Him only for God and virtue, we may also become partakers of His resurrection, and enter into eternal life.

The words of the Apostle: "We all, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in his death; for we are buried together with him by baptism unto death," are explained by St. Ambrose in the following manner: "What does it mean to be baptized in the death of Christ? It means that as Christ died, so shall we also die; as Christ died to sin, and lived unto God, so you also have died to your former sinful inclinations through the Sacrament of Baptism, and risen through the grace of Christ. It is, therefore, not a real, but a figurative death, for when you are immersed you receive the figure of death and of burial; you receive the Sacrament of the Cross, because Christ hung upon the cross, and His body was pierced with nails. You, therefore, when you hang crucified upon the cross of Christ, are fastened by the nails of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that the devil cannot drag you from it. May the nails of Christ preserve you, whom human nature has called back (to sin)."

St. Remigius, in reference to this, very appropriately says: "As Christ, the Head of the Elect, has died for us upon the cross, so, too, have the Elect, His members, died to sin with Christ their Head; for, as all the members of any living body die when the head is cut off, so, after the death of Christ, the Elect, and those that were baptized in His death, died in Him."

St. Prosper beautifully explains the words: "To die to sin." He says: "What else is meant by *dying to sin* except to die to wicked deeds and sensual desires? Such a person is as dead; he slanders no one, he opposes no one, despises no one, does not ensnare the chastity of any one, speaks no evil of others, envies no person for what he possesses, oppresses not the poor, does not serve the concupiscence of the flesh, does not drink or tempt others to drunkenness,

excites not to hatred, desires no ill-gotten goods, flatters not the rich and those in power, is not carried away by a restless spirit of curiosity, is not depressed by domestic cares and by fears for the future, and takes no delight in the cordial greetings of those who meet him, nor is scandalized at the neglect of the proud. He is not filled with pride or ambition, nor does vain glory inflate him; he is not anxious to possess a great name, nor will he commit wicked deeds like those who live in sensuality, and thus offend God. As the really dead can neither do nor suffer this, so also those who live unto God live not to these things, but crucify their flesh together with their vices and concupiscences."

But what is meant, "by walking in newness of life," St. Augustine answers by saying: "It means to go on so that you may not become careless, and walk too slowly. Go on, examine yourself without wishing to be decided as to your state, wishing to flatter yourself without hypocrisy. You should always be displeased with yourself, as you are, if you wish to become that which you are not, for if you are satisfied with yourself, then will you be content to remain in that state, and when you say: It is enough—you will perish. Be adding to what you have, be always advancing; for he who does not advance, remains behind: he goes back who returns to the place from whence he started, and he is lost who leaves the path. A lame man who is on the right road is better than one who runs swiftly in the wrong direction." In reference to the obligation of leading a good, holy life, which we took upon ourselves in holy baptism, the same learned Father of the Church says: "The enemy was banished from your heart; you promised to renounce him, which promise, recorded not by man, but by God Himself and His holy Angels, you made when you said the words: 'I renounce.' Renounce him then not only with your lips, but also by your actions; not only with your tongue, but also by your works. Remember, that you have taken upon yourself to combat with a wily enemy; let him not find anything in you belonging to him after you have renounced him, let him not inveigle you into his service, for, O Christian, if you either do or confess anything contrary to that which you have promised, if you do not live as a Christian, and are not faithful to your promise, if you only go to church and pray, but soon afterwards frequent the company of actors and magicians, then will you surely be surprised and captured."

GOSPEL. Mark 8: 1–9.

"At that time: When there was a great multitude with Jesus, and they had nothing to eat, calling his disciples together, he saith to them: I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away fasting to their homes, they will faint in the way, for some of them come from afar off. And his disciples answered him: From whence can any one fill them here with bread, in the wilderness? And he asked them: How many loaves have ye? who said: Seven.

And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks, he broke, and gave to his disciples to set before them, and they set them before the people. And they had a few little fishes, and he blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them. And they did eat, and were filled, and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away."

The Gospel of to-day relates to us the second wonderful multiplication of the loaves, which our Saviour performed in the desert to feed the multitude, who had followed Him thither to listen to His divine teachings. The first wonderful multiplication of the loaves and fishes was read to us on the fourth Sunday in Lent, in order to direct our attention to the more wonderful bread of heaven, contained in the most blessed Eucharist, for the worthy reception of which we are obliged to prepare ourselves on the approach of Easter. The Church, to-day, relates to us the second miracle, the feeding of four thousand men with seven loaves and a few fishes, because with this Sunday, commences the summer season, in which the Lord every year performs a similar miracle by giving His blessing to the fields, which fact should not the less incite us to praise His omnipotence and benignity, than the miracle related to us in the Gospel; at the same time it directs our attention again to that bread of heaven administered in the most blessed Sacrament to those who, sanctified by holy baptism, have become members of the body of Christ, in order to nourish and strengthen their souls that they may be able to die more truly to sin, to overcome more and more the concupiscence of the flesh, live for God and virtue, and, thus united with Him, rise gloriously to eternal life. (See John 6 : 55.)

The Gospel of to-day contains also some other very important lessons. The multitudes who followed the Saviour into the desert, in order to hear from His lips the word of God, gave us a beautiful example, which is worthy of imitation, in the fervent desire which they showed to possess the eternal goods of heaven; for they had been with Christ three days without feeling tired; they had forgotten the want of food for their body in their desire to receive food for their souls; but we see also how magnificently our Saviour rewarded this praiseworthy disposition on their part by giving them, besides the spiritual food which they abundantly received through His divine teachings, not less abundant food for their body through a wonder of His divine omnipotence, at the same time adding that unto those who seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, all these things shall be added. St. Ambrose, in reference to this, very truly says: "After Christ had performed miracles, after the Apostles had been appointed to preach the word of God, He administered the food of heavenly grace; but let us consider to whom He administered it; not to the idle, nor to those who remain in the city, but to those who seek Christ in the desert. Those who are indefatigable are received by Christ, and the word of God speaks to them not

of worldly affairs, but of the kingdom of God. He who has wounds upon his body is willing to use the remedies prescribed. It was only right, therefore, that our Lord should free from fasting those whose painful wounds He had healed by administering to them spiritual food. No one, therefore, receives the food of Christ who has not first been healed, and those who are invited to the heavenly feast are first healed by being invited. The lame man had first to receive the power to walk before he could come; the blind man, only after having his sight restored could enter into the house of the Lord. Everywhere, therefore, is the same mysterious order observed that, first, by forgiving sins a remedy is given for the healing of wounds, and afterwards the food of the heavenly feast is abundantly administered; although these multitudes were not yet fed with stronger food, nor were their hearts, still weak in faith, fed with the body and blood of Christ. 'I gave you milk to drink,' says the Apostle, 'not meat, for you were not able as yet.' (1 Cor. 3 : 2.) The loaves represent the milk, but the stronger food is the body of Christ, and the stronger drink the blood of the Lord."

The fact that our Saviour had the benefits of His divine liberality with which He desired to feed the multitudes, administered to them by the hands of His disciples, contains also an important truth; we are instructed thereby how God, the omnipotent and all-merciful benefactor of man, has made the rich the stewards and dispensers of His divine benefits, because He has given to them abundantly so that they may likewise give to the poor and needy. In reference to this St. Basil the Great gives a beautiful instruction to the rich. He says: "You see how our Lord, regardless of other wants, is merciful to the hungry, for He said: 'I have compassion on the people.' It is for this reason that, at the last judgment, when the Lord calls the just, he who has been charitable and liberal, shall occupy the first place; for he who feeds the hungry is mentioned as the first among those who shall receive a reward; the kind and charitable man, therefore, is the first to enter eternal life; the hard-hearted and the avaricious man, on the contrary, shall go into everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25 : 35, 42.) Profit, therefore, by the occasion which the abundance of your goods offers you, to practice these great virtues; put them at once into practice, for the time is passing quickly away, and will not tarry for you if you delay; use, therefore, every opportunity to do good; in return for the little which you give, you will receive much—you can make amends for all your sins by being charitable; for as Adam sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, so we can destroy the consequences of this sin by feeding our needy and hungry brethren."

Finally the seven loaves, with which our Lord in His love and mercy, through the hands of His disciples, fed the multitudes in the desert, in order to stay their hunger, signify the seven sacraments, which our Saviour has left in His Church that they might be administered as food to the faithful by the hands of the successors of the Apostles, the Bishops and the priests, so that they may receive in the

manifold wants of this life the necessary strength for their souls and, without perishing in the desert of the world, accomplish the way which leads to eternal happiness.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS. PS. 46.

"O clap your hands, all ye nations, shout unto God with the voice of joy; for the Lord is most high, he is terrible: he is a great king over all the earth." Glory be to the Father.

These words, spoken by the royal Prophet in praising God for the victory he achieved over the enemies of the people, our Church repeats in reference to the victory obtained by Christ, the Son of God, over the enemies of our salvation, and invites all the faithful to praise and glorify with grateful hearts Him who conquered hell, and delivered them from the chains of darkness and hell.

PRAYER.

O God, whose providence is not deceived in its appointment, we humbly beseech Thee to remove from us all that is hurtful, and grant us all that will prove profitable. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

EPISTLE.—Rom. 6 : 19–23.

"Brethren: I speak a human thing, because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, unto iniquity; so now yield your members to serve justice unto sanctification. For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from justice. What fruit, therefore, had you then in those things, of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting. For the wages of sin is death; but the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Church admonishes us in these words of St. Paul that, as redeemed by Christ from sin, and sanctified through the Holy Ghost, we should prove ourselves worthy of the grace of having been called to the true faith, by leading a truly Christian life, and by becoming faithful servants of God: and if we have

formerly yielded our body, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and the members of this our body to serve uncleanness and iniquity, we in like manner should now yield them to serve justice unto sanctification. We should, according to the admonition of the Apostle, show at least as much zeal in the practice of good works, as we have heretofore shown in doing evil, remembering that the service of sin is death, but the service of justice, life everlasting. St. Gregory thus explains these words of the Apostle: "Be at least, in the practice of good, as zealous as you have been in the commission of evil, so that the holy freedom of love may not find any weakness in one who was so strong in the use of his worldly will in the flesh." In reference to the words of St. Paul: "so now yield your members to serve justice," the learned Origen gives the following beautiful instruction to those who have been converted from sin to the true faith and to virtue: "For a long time did your feet carry you to the temples of demons, but now they must take you to the Church of God; formerly they ran to spill blood, but now they must run to save it; formerly your hands were stretched forth to rob others of what belonged to them, but now they must be extended to give from what is your own. Formerly your eyes looked upon the wives or the goods of others, desiring to possess them, but now they must look upon the poor and weak, having mercy on them; the ears which once delighted in listening to vain things, in defaming the good, must now listen to the word of God, the interpretation of the law, the understanding of wisdom, and the teachings of the Church; the tongue once used only to slander, curse, and speak wicked words, must now be used to praise God at all times, and utter sound and healthy speech, so that all who hear you may be edified."

We should therefore, according to the words of the Apostle, just as we have formerly committed sin, not out of fear, but out of joy and delight, now also do good not out of fear, but out of love, as St. Augustine says: "As no fear caused you to sin, but the desire and delight of sin itself, so also should not the fear of punishment incite you to lead a good life, more than the delight of practicing and loving justice for its own sake. When you yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, were you led to it by fear, or were you invited by pleasure? You answer: By pleasure. The pleasure and sweetness of justice, therefore, should induce you now to do good, and love justice as you have loved wickedness."

GOSPEL.—Matt. 7: 15–21.

"At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth

good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not every man that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."

In connection with the Epistle, in which we were invited to an earnest and cheerful practice of Christian justice, the Church warns us against all that could prevent us from following the admonition of the Apostle; that is, against being seduced from without, and against being blinded within, and repeatedly and strongly exhorts us faithfully to execute the will of God, by doing which alone can we enter the kingdom of heaven.

False prophets, against whom our Saviour warns us, are according to the interpretation of the Holy Fathers, all those who wish to seduce us to infidelity and error, or to sin and iniquity; every seducer, therefore, is a false prophet. They come in the clothing of sheep, that is, they assume a pious, innocent, and meek appearance, in order to destroy the innocent more surely, as, according to the Holy Scriptures, "Satan transformeth himself into an angel of light," (2 Cor. 11 : 14), in order to seduce man. This artful hypocrisy of the enemies of our salvation is permitted by the Almighty, that we should be the more careful and watchful in regard to the dangers that threaten us. As we know, however, the tree by its fruits, so do we know these hypocrites, if we observe them attentively, by their fruits, that is, by their works, which they either practice themselves, or which are the result of their principles and their teachings. As thorns or thistles cannot bring forth good fruit, in the same manner a man, who like an unproductive and evil tree, possesses no good qualities, and whose moral character is of no value, cannot bring forth good fruit, no works that are pleasing to God; on the contrary, he will, like weeds among vegetables and flowers, bring ruin and perdition to his fellow-creatures. St. Paul also warns us against such false prophets and seducers in his epistle to Timothy: "Know also this, that, in the last days shall come dangerous times. Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, without peace, slanderers, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness, traitors, stubborn, puffed up, and lovers of pleasures more than of God: having an appearance, indeed, of piety, but denying the power thereof. Now these avoid." (2 Tim. 3 : 1–5.)

Not less dangerous than the false prophets, that is, being seduced from without, is, according to the Gospel of to-day, the danger of being blind within, that is, the delusion of so many who, although guarding themselves against grievous sin, never perform a good and meritorious work, and who, although their faith is dead, that is, without good works, think themselves just and holy and sure of obtaining eternal happiness. Such men, however, according to the words of Christ, are like trees that bring forth leaves, but no fruit; they do

not merit a place in the garden of the Lord, but deserve rather to be cast into fire, that is, to be eternally punished. To obtain eternal life, it is not sufficient, according to the words of our Saviour, to call God our Lord, that is, only to believe in Him and confess Him with our lips, but it is necessary also to do His will, to keep His commandments, showing our faith in our deeds and leading a good life. St. Augustine says: "Christ defines the kind of fruit which a Christian, if he wishes to be a good tree, must bring forth. He must fulfill the will of our heavenly Father, for it is not sufficient to observe only outwardly the doctrine of Christ. Those only who see the divine truths through faith, and exercise good works in charity, whose words and deeds harmonize, will be the heirs of heaven. Let us not mistake leaves for fruit, let us not believe that the fruit which God demands from us consists in naked and unfruitful words. The fruit which we must bring forth, is the fulfillment of the will of our heavenly Father. That words are not sufficient to save us is so certain, that even signs and wonders, performed in the name of Jesus, are after all but uncertain criterions, from which we cannot safely conclude that we are numbered among souls pleasing to God, and that we shall obtain heaven. The Apostle says: "If I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 47.

"WE have received thy mercy, O God, in the midst of thy temple. According to thy name, O God, so also is thy praise unto the ends of the earth; thy right hand is full of justice. Great is the Lord and exceedingly to be praised, in the city of our God on his holy mountain."

The Church repeats these words of the Psalmist in grateful acknowledgment of the divine graces and blessings, which were given to the faithful through redemption and sanctification in the Church of Christ, and admonishes us to prove ourselves worthy of these great mercies of God, to live as faithful children of God, and to co-operate with the means of salvation, which are given us, in order that we may obtain eternal reward.

PRAYER.

Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, at all times, the spirit of thinking and doing what is right, that we, who cannot exist without Thee, may be able to live according to Thee. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—Rom. 8 : 12–17.

"Brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die. But if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live. For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear: but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba (Father). For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also: heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

St. Paul in this Epistle reminds us, that we, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, should not live according to the concupiscence of the flesh, which leads to perdition, but as children of God and heirs of heaven, according to the direction of the Holy Ghost, and after the example of Christ; for it will be of no avail to us, to have received in baptism the grace of the Holy Ghost, if our whole life is not guided by Him; if we are not therefore led and directed by the Holy Ghost, we will necessarily fall back into the former snares of the concupiscence of the flesh. St. Chrysostom in reference to this, says: "Although you have received the sacrament of baptism, you will, if not guided by the Spirit, lose the dignity and the right of the adoption of sons. The Apostle therefore says not

'whosoever hath received the Spirit of God,' but whosoever 'are led,' by the Spirit of God, that is, who live, as if led by the Spirit, and who thus show themselves to be children of God."

The Apostle then draws a brief contrast between the superiority of the new law over the old law, the spirit of the adoption of sons, which the faithful have received through the Son of God, over the spirit of bondage or servile fear, which was predominant among the Jews in the old law, who only by the promise of earthly reward and by threats of temporal punishment, that is by fear, could be led to the observance of the divine commandments, while Christians are encouraged to lead a virtuous and holy life from supernatural motives, by obedience and love to God, their heavenly Father and sanctifier, and by the eternal reward of heaven. St. Chrysostom points out to us this spirit of the adoption of sons of God in Christianity, in contrast to the spirit of bondage in Judaism; he says: "Punishment lay at the feet of the Jews, and they received their reward immediately, in the same proportion as grain is given to the servants; they were seized with fear on all sides; for the body there was an outward ablution, and after labor, rest. It is not so with us Christians; the mind and the conscience are cleansed; for the Lord not only said: 'Thou shalt not kill,' but also: 'Thou shalt not be angry;' He not only said: 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' but He also said: 'Thou shalt not use indecent language,' so that not out of fear of punishment, but out of love to Him, virtue may be practiced and justice may be done. He does not promise a land overflowing with milk and honey, but He has made us co-heirs of His only-begotten Son; He draws us away from perishable things, and promises to give what will be received by those who are the children of God—nothing sensual, nothing corporeal, but all that is spiritual."

GOSPEL.—Luke 16 : 1-9.

"At that time, Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him: How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship: for now thou canst be steward no longer. And the steward said within himself: What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. Therefore calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said: An hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another: And how much dost thou owe? Who said: An hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him: take thy bill, and write eighty. And the lord commended the

unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely: for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. And I say to you: Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings."

This parable teaches us to use wisely and prudently, according to the will of God, all the gifts and graces we have received from Him, so that on the day of reckoning we will be found to have been faithful stewards of His goods, and thus become partakers of the eternal reward.

Our Saviour implies by the parable, that the Lord God, the Creator and Lord of all things, He who in truth merits to be called rich, because He alone possesses all things, has entrusted all the goods which He has created to man, making him the steward thereof. Whatever temporal or spiritual goods we possess, are given to us by God to be wisely used; we are however not the owners of these goods, but only His stewards, and we must give a strict account of our stewardship. St. Chrysostom says: "It is erroneous for us to consider ourselves as the proper owners of all the goods of this life, as if they were our own property; for we are pilgrims and strangers, (Hebr. 11 : 13,) who have soon to leave; we are but the stewards of the goods of another, and should therefore endeavor to possess humility and modesty, which are becoming in a steward, for nothing is our own, all belongs to God the giver."

If we waste those goods which the Lord has entrusted to us, like the unjust steward of the Gospel, or if in any other manner we misuse them, or do not apply them according to the will of God, the same punishment will be awarded us, as was received by the unjust steward; the Lord God will withdraw from us His grace and will reject us from His presence.

If our Saviour warns us against imitating the injustice of the steward, He also draws our attention to the prudence with which the man made his master's debtors his own, by causing them to change their bills, thus securing their assistance in any future emergency. We must therefore imitate the prudence of this unjust steward and the prudence of the children of this world generally, and make use of it, not for earthly purposes, as they do, but for a higher end, for our salvation. As the unjust steward made friends of the debtors of his master by remitting part of their debt, so also should we, as the Saviour says, make friends unto us of the mammon of iniquity, by distributing a part of our goods among the poor and needy, in order to have them our intercessors and helpers at the approaching judgment, thus securing to ourselves eternal happiness.

When our Saviour says: "Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity," He does not wish to say, that we should give any part of ill-gotten goods to the poor, and quietly enjoy the rest, as if we had obtained them by lawful means, (ill-gotten goods can never become lawful goods; they must be restored to the

owner), but He calls wealth in general unjust, because it is not a good, which properly belongs to us, for the reason also that it is frequently obtained by acts of injustice; and because at the same time its possession leads so easily to other sins. In reference to this St. Jerome says: "There is a great deal of truth contained in the old proverb: The rich man is either an unjust man himself, or the heir of an unjust man." The same learned Father of the Church makes the following remarks upon the words of our Saviour, relating to the unjust steward: "If the unjust steward has been commended by the lord, because by his unjust dealings he secured to himself the gratitude of the debtors of his lord, and if the lord, although suffering the loss himself, commends the prudence of him who caused him to lose, because he acted fraudulently against his lord, and prudently for himself: how much more will Christ, whom no one can injure, and who is so kind, commend His disciples, if they are merciful, to those that believe in Him."

FEAST OF THE VISITATION OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

(July 2.)

THIS is one of those feasts of the Church which is celebrated with an Octave. It reminds us of that beautiful and instructive incident in the life of the most blessed Virgin Mary who, after the Archangel Gabriel had brought her the glad news that God had chosen her to become the Mother of the Saviour, set out to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who was to become the mother of St. John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus.

The Introit of the Mass is the same as of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin (December 8).

PRAYER.

Vouchsafe, Lord, we beseech Thee, to us Thy servants the gift of Thy heavenly grace; that, as in the child-birth of the blessed Virgin our salvation began,

so from the votive solemnity of her Visitation we may obtain an increase of peace. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—Canticle of Canticles, 2 : 8–14.

"Behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills. My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart. Behold he standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices. Behold my beloved speaketh to me: Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come: the voice of the turtle is heard in our land: the fig-tree hath put forth her green figs: the vines in flower yield their sweet smell. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come: my dove in the clifts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, show me thy face, let thy voice sound in my ears; for thy voice is sweet, and thy face comely."

The book of the Scriptures, from which this Epistle is taken, is styled, on account of its sublime and poetic language, the Canticle of Canticles. Typifying the chaste love of a bridegroom and his bride, it shows the holy and affectionate relation of the heavenly bridegroom, Jesus Christ, to His spotless Bride, the Church, and indeed to every just and pure soul who, according to the language of Holy Writ, is called a Bride of the Lord. Our holy Church, the the Bride of this Canticle, very significantly recognizes in it the Mother of the Lord, the most blessed Virgin Mary, who, on account of her exaltation as the Mother of the Son of God, is called the Spouse of the Holy Ghost.

That passage of the Canticles in this day's Epistle, in which the heavenly Bride says of her beloved: "Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills," is very appropriately selected for our meditation; as the most blessed Virgin, when setting out on her visit, did indeed bear Jesus, the heavenly Bridegroom, whom she had already conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, over the mountains, and into the house of Zachary, in order to sanctify His precursor before his birth.

The heavenly Bridegroom justly calls the most blessed Virgin His love; for, on account of her spotless purity, and freedom from all sin, she was at every moment of her life in the grace and love of God. He calls her a *dove* on account of her innocence and simplicity of heart; he calls her *beautiful*, because she was adorned with every virtue, and thus possessed the true and imperishable beauty of the soul.

The description of the commencement of spring in to-day's Epistle, may be very appropriately referred to the beginning of the redemption through the incarnation of the Son of God; for the time of darkness, irreligion, and separation from God which, like an icy winter, had sunk the whole world in a deadly stupor and spiritual death, was to disappear through the coming of the promised

Saviour, in order to usher in the heavenly spring, in which Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, would rise and diffuse the blessed rays of His divine influence over all mankind, to awaken all from their sleep of death to a new, spiritual, and heavenly life, and to enable them to bring forth beautiful blossoms and fruits for the kingdom of God.

GOSPEL.—Luke 1 : 39—47.

"At that time, Mary, rising up, went into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord. And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour."

We know that the most blessed Virgin Mary had been informed by the Archangel Gabriel that her cousin Elizabeth would bring forth a son in her old age, and that his birth was soon to take place. Love then animated her to visit her relative in haste, in order to felicitate her on this unhoped for grace, and also to give her the assistance her condition required.

The city of Hebron, where Zachary and Elizabeth lived, was over forty leagues distant from Nazareth, and the rugged and weary road thither, leading over the mountains, offered many difficulties to the tender Virgin. After receiving the gracious news, Mary would no doubt have preferred remaining in her quiet solitude, in order to meditate undisturbed on the great mystery which was to be fulfilled in her, and to thank and praise her Creator; but all this could not prevent her from visiting her cousin, to whom she desired to show her sympathy and love. "Mary," says St. Ambrose, "who up to that time was accustomed to live in the seclusion of her chamber, does not permit her timidity to prevent her leaving her solitude, neither does her zeal become less fervent on account of the ruggedness of the mountain-path, nor her sympathy less ardent by the hardships which she would have to encounter on the way." Indeed she goes WITH HASTE to her relative, as if impatient to follow the divine inspiration, urging her to make the journey, but also in order to arrive as soon as possible. "The virgin goes *with haste*," says St. Ambrose, "in order not to stay long on the public road. Learn from her, maidens, not to stay unnecessarily long in the streets or public squares. Mary remains at home, and goes WITH HASTE when in the street."

The deep humility of the holy Virgin, so worthy of imitation, is also most beautifully expressed upon the occasion of her visiting Elizabeth. Although just honored by the highest graces, reverently saluted by an Angel, chosen by God Himself as Mother of His only-begotten Son, and exalted above her whole sex, she does not wait for Elizabeth to visit HER; no, she forgets her high dignity, and visits her first. "And thus, also," says St. Ambrose, "did she become still more humble, when she saw herself chosen by God, and she hastens immediately to her relative, not for the purpose of strengthening her faith in the divine promise by the sight of her relative, a faith which she had already manifested by word of mouth." She exhibited a condescension similar to that of her divine Son, Jesus Christ, who came down from heaven for the salvation of man; she brought Him, the Saviour of the world, whom she had already conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, near to His forerunner John, that the latter might be sanctified even before his birth through the presence of Christ. "We should observe," says St. Ambrose, "how upon this occasion the superior visits the inferior, in order to assist the inferior; Mary comes to Elizabeth, Christ to John. Thus also did Christ afterwards come to John to be baptized, so as to sanctify the baptism of John."

The humility of Mary is also shown in her being the first to give the greeting; for she, who had just been reverently hailed by the Angel of the Lord as Mother of the Lord, is the first to greet the mother of the servant. Thus, in general, those who are in possession of the divine grace, are free from pride and haughtiness, and always ready to please their fellow-creatures, and to humble themselves before them; for humility is the sign of true dignity and greatness before God, just as arrogance denotes a mean and badly disposed heart. In speaking of pride, St. Chrysostom says very truly: "Proud and ridiculous are those who will not speak, if not first saluted; the wise and humble are the first to greet, because their minds are filled with true humility and virtuous feeling, because they suppress their own haughtiness and that of others, and because they overcome hatred, contention and passion."

When Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant, she was to bring forth, leaped joyfully in her womb. Thus was already shown at the first public appearance of the blessed Mother of the Lord the great influence which she possessed with her divine Son. Jesus sanctifies His precursor by the voice of His Mother, and this is the first miracle worked by the Lord through the agency of Mary.

St. Bernard says: "Nothing shows us more clearly the power that the Saviour gave to His Mother than the manner in which He bestowed His graces. He wishes to sanctify His precursor even before his birth, and He grants him this grace through Mary." But the blessed presence of the Mother of the Lord, and the secret presence of Jesus, affected Elizabeth not less miraculously than it did John; for she was filled with the Holy Ghost, and spoke words of sublime

significance. St. Ambrose says: "Elizabeth hears the first words of Mary, and John feels in the same moment the grace of Jesus Christ. The two mothers show exteriorly the miracles of grace, and John, interiorly, feels their effects. Jesus fills St. John with the particular grace to become His forerunner, and St. John exercises his office, even before his birth, by a two-fold miracle. And, finally, the words of Mary and Elizabeth, each animated by the spirit of her son, are prophecies and declarations from heaven."

Elizabeth, in her surprise and joy, caused by the humility of the most blessed Virgin, expresses her astonishment at the Mother of the Lord coming to visit her. She envies not the far greater privilege of her younger relative, and rather rejoices in it, for souls chosen by God, never envy the greater graces of others, but regard themselves as even unworthy of the lesser graces they have received themselves. She also calls Mary blessed on account of her faith in the divine promise which, as she foresaw by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, was certainly to be accomplished. "Thou seest then," remarks St. Ambrose, "that Mary doubted not, but believed, and that, therefore, she received also the fruit of her belief. For thus says Elizabeth: '*Blessed art thou that hast believed,*' and blessed also are ye who hear and believe; for every soul who believes, conceives and brings forth, as it were, the word of God, and recognizes His works."

And Mary, filled with the Holy Ghost, gave utterance to that inspired song of praise in which she expressed the sublime thoughts and feelings that animated her, in which she sends forth thanks and praises to God who has done such great things to her, and who, at all times, heaps the fullness of His blessings upon those who fear and trust in Him. For she said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed: for he that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is his name. He hath showed might in his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent away empty. He hath received Israel, his servant, being mindful of his mercy. As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever."

This beautiful song of praise of the most blessed Virgin, commonly called the "*Magnificat,*" is according to the regulations of our holy Church daily repeated in the canonical hours at Vespers, in order that the praise of the good may daily resound in the mouths of the servants of the Church, as it formerly came forth from the mouth of His mother, when filled with the Holy Ghost.

Mary, as related by St. Luke, abode with Elizabeth about three months (probably until after the birth of St. John), and then returned to Nazareth, to her own house, to prepare herself in quiet solitude for the accomplishment of the great mystery that had been announced to her.

FEAST OF THE SEPARATION OF THE APOSTLES.

(July 15.)

THIS feast calls to our mind, how the Apostles, according to the command of the Saviour, to go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature, having for some time after the ascension of the Lord, labored together in the country of the Jews—divided the whole earth among themselves for the purpose of propagating the religion of Christ, each in the part allotted to him. Before separating, they resolved, as tradition says, to compose a short and concise creed in order to prevent the least difference in preaching the Gospel among the many disciples sent out for that purpose, and to prevent also false teachers from spreading their errors among the faithful; a creed which should serve as a basis for the Christian ministry, and also as the symbol, sign and centre of union for all members of the Church. This simple creed is still used in our holy Catholic Church as a rule of faith, and is called the *Apostles' Creed.*

The Apostles, according to the opinion of the holy teachers of the Church, when dividing the different countries of the world among themselves, did not proceed in an arbitrary manner, or by casting lots, but acted in conformity with the importance of the matter, and according to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Thus when Paul and Barnabas were to be sent forth to the Gentiles in order to preach the Gospel, according to the very words of the Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Ghost said to the assembled: *Separate me Paul and Barnabas, for the work to which I have taken them* (Acts 13: 2.). That is, to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. Regarding the different countries whither the disciples were to go to preach the Gospel, an ancient tradition (referred to by St. Jerome and the historian Rufinus) says that there was apportioned to St. Peter, Babylonia and the Jews living in exile; to St. Paul, Greece and Italy; to St. James the greater, Spain; to St. John, Asia Minor and Parthia; to St. Philip, Upper Asia; to St. Thomas, Parthia and India; to St. Bartholomew, Armenia; to St. Simon Cananæus, Mesopotamia and Persia; to St. Thaddeus, Arabia and Idumæa; to St. Matthias, Ethiopia; and to St. Andrew, Scythia (the southern part of Russia). St. Chrysostom has taken the Separation of the Apostles as the subject for a beautiful sermon, in which, differing somewhat from the tradition mentioned above, he says: "Christ chose twelve valiant companions, and each of them received a crown. One and the same aid, strengthening and blessing, accompanied them to the struggle, assisted them in fighting and rewarded them with the most decisive and glorious victory. Happy therefore are ye, blessed and chosen disciples of the Lord! Ye, who

have become all to all out of love to your fellow-men, and by the assistance of the Saviour; you have guided whole nations not with the staff, but with the power of the divine word; you are the firm pillars of the true faith, the rock of the Church, the sceptre of the empire, and the watchful protectors of the numberless multitude of faithful; you are the most successful physicians for the cure of all human evils and diseases; and you are the most compassionate reconcilers of repenting sinners with our heavenly Father.

You have blessed and converted to the true faith all who persecuted and reviled you. Thus Rome was given to Peter to be instructed in Christianity, and Paul preached from this capital of the world, the Gospel to the whole world; Andrew points out the right path to the learned men of Greece, Simon teaches the barbarians to recognize God, Thomas purifies the Ethiopians through holy baptism; Judea glories in having St. James (the lesser) as her teacher, Alexandria esteems herself happy to have become the seat of St. Mark, Luke and Matthew are the authors of Gospels; John rescues Ephesus from paganism, Bartholomew instructs the Lycaonians in temperance, and Philip by his miracles saves Hierapolis from eternal ruin.

These holy messengers of the Lord never grew weary of benefiting all people in all places; they have left us their incorruptible dust in their graves, and now we revere them piously; soon they will rise from the tomb and come forth as judges of the world. If a lame man approaches an Apostle, he is enabled to leave his presence with his limbs strengthened and healed, and joyfully leaping, returns home; if a paralytic meets another, he is told by him to rise, take his bed, and carry it home. Another revives a dead person, and he rises from the grave; the mere shadow of one Apostle cures every disease; the wicked spirits fear the prayer of another, and his handkerchief possesses healing properties; for they were disciples of the Master, the hem of whose garment, when secretly touched, cured the sick woman.

Introit of the Holy Mass, the same as of *the Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle.* (November 30.)

Prayer of the Church: O God, who didst give us the knowledge of Thy name through Thy holy Apostles, grant also that the celebration of their everlasting glory may benefit us and make us always more perfect. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Epistle is the same as of *the Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle*, and the *Gospel* the same as of *the Feast of St. Mark the Evangelist.* (April 25.)

LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

ST. PAMBO.

(July 1.)

"Presumption."

ST. PAMBO was a disciple of St. Anthony, and, like him, led a life of seclusion. We are still in possession of an answer given by St. Anthony to his disciple, when asked by the latter what he should do in his cell. Anthony said: "Have no confidence in your own merits, think not of perishable goods, and keep your tongue and stomach in submission." Pambo, not being able to read, went to visit a friend in order to be taught by him how to recite one of the psalms. After having heard the first verse of the 83d Psalm: "I said: I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue," Pambo went home, as he did not wish to hear the second verse, for he said that this one verse would be sufficient for him, if he could only practice it perfectly. His friend, however, reproached him for not having come back to learn the rest of the Psalm; but Pambo said that he had not as yet fully practiced the first verse. When, after many years, he was asked by the same friend if he yet knew the verse, he said: "These nineteen years I have hardly learned the practice thereof."

St. Pambo never answered hastily when questioned concerning the holy Scriptures, or when consulted upon other business. His answers were so considerate, that every one received them with the greatest veneration, as if coming from heaven. He was so circumspect and prudent in his speech, that he is said to have surpassed St. Anthony and all the Saints. The Bishop of Alexandria once came on a visit to the hermits; the brethren assembled together, and as Pambo was their Superior, they begged him to make an address to the Bishop, but Pambo replied: "If the Bishop will not be edified by my

silence, he will not by an address." An Abbot, named Theodore, once asked Pambo for advice and instruction. Instead of speaking on religious subjects, he simply said: "Theodore, return home, practice mercy to all, for mercy will give confidence before God."

A very wealthy matron of Rome, named Melania, came to Alexandria for the purpose of seeing Pambo. She brought him a quantity of silver, and begged him to accept a portion of her wealth. Pambo, who was plaiting willows, continued his work, and said to one of his disciples: "Take the silver, and use it for the entire community of Libya and the islands; their convents are poorer than ours in Egypt. Melania expected in return for so rich a present at least one word of praise, but as Pambo remained quiet, she said: "Here are three hundred pounds of silver." Pambo, however, did not even look at the money, but said: "Daughter, He to whom you have given the silver, does not need to hear from you its weight or measure; if you had given it to me, it would have been proper to have mentioned the weight; but if you have presented it to God, it will be best for you to be silent." Another person came to the Saint, and presented him with several pieces of gold for distribution among the poor; when asked to count it, Pambo said: "It is unnecessary to do so—all depends upon the right intention." St. Pambo was summoned to appear before the Bishop of Alexandria. On his way into the city, meeting an actress, he began to weep; being questioned as to the cause of his tears, he replied: "Two things make me weep; first, because the soul of this woman will be lost, and, secondly, because I feel that I am not as zealous in serving God as this woman is in pleasing the world." One day, four brothers dressed in deer skins came to Pambo. Each one praised the other's virtues; one fasted much, the other had given away all that he possessed, the third had great charity, and of the fourth they said that he had lived for twenty-two years under obedience to the Fathers of the desert. St. Pambo answered: "The virtue of the last is greater than that of the three first; for each of you has practiced virtue according to your own will, but the last gave up his will, and made himself a servant to the will of others. Such men are true Christians, if they only persevere unto the end."

Two brothers, after the death of their father, who had been a merchant, divided their inheritance, and consulted together as to what profession they should choose. They said: "If we pursue the trade of our father, we will leave to others the fruits of our labor, and may fall into the hands of robbers or else perish at sea; we will rather select the monastic life, and use our inheritance for the salvation of our souls. They both agreed to live in seclusion, but they differed concerning the execution of their plan. One gave away all that he had to churches and convents, and learned a trade by which to earn his daily bread; the other one, on the contrary, kept what he possessed, but built a small hospice, received those who wished to enter, practiced hospitality to every one, attended the sick, provided for aged men, and gave alms to all the poor. Every

Saturday and Sunday he prepared three or four tables, and invited the poor to dinner. In this manner he spent his life. Both of these hermits were called blessed after their death on account of their perfection in virtue. The life of the one, who had given away all, was pleasing to some, and the life of the other, who was so charitable to the poor, was more pleasing to others. A dispute arose as to which of the brothers deserved the highest praise. The disputants went to St. Pambo, in order that he might decide the question. Pambo said: "Both are perfect before God; one imitated Abraham who received every one with hospitality, the other practiced the determined and persevering zeal of Elias, and was also pleasing to God."

To judge and criticise others is such an universal disease of the soul, that people daily not only condemn others for their actions, but even presume to distribute the places in heaven, that is they pretend to decide as to who is the greatest Saint. It is, indeed, presumptuous in a sinner who, perhaps, may never even obtain the least place in heaven, to determine what rank should be given to the Saints. Which is the more beautiful, a rose or a lily, a slender willow or a magnificent oak? Each was made by the Almighty, and is beautiful in its way, and cannot be compared with the other. In the same manner do the Saints differ from one another, but yet all are infinitely pleasing to God. Therefore, dear reader, you should not dispute as to which state of life is the best, or whether a religious teacher is better than a lay teacher; for God desires to be served in different states of life; it only depends upon our choosing that state to which we are called, and upon our fulfilling as well as we can the obligations of our calling.

When Pambo was seventy years old, and occupied as usual in making baskets, he called to one of his disciples, saying: "Take this basket from my hands as a remembrance of me, for I have nothing else to leave you." After having said this, he died without having suffered from any sickness, and without pain, recommending his spirit to the Lord.

VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

(July 2.)

"The Magnificat."

In the Visions of Catharina Emmerich, containing the Passion of Christ and the life of the Blessed Virgin, we find the following containing the visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: "A few days after the annunciation of the Angel to Mary, Joseph returned to Nazareth, and arranged matters in regard to his work at home; for he had not lived before in Nazareth, but had only been there a few days. Joseph knew nothing of the mystery of the Incarnation that had taken place in Mary; she was the mother, but also the handmaid of the Lord, and humbly kept the secret. The Blessed Virgin, as soon as she knew that the WORD was MADE FLESH in her, felt a great desire to visit her cousin Elizabeth in Jutta, near Hebron, of whom the Angel had said that it was the sixth month with her. The Passover being nigh, and Joseph wishing to go to Jerusalem at that time, he accompanied her thither.

"The journey was southward, and they had an ass, upon which Mary rode now and then; they carried some baggage with them, and traveled quite rapidly. I saw them after they had passed through the plains of Esdrelon, stopping at the house of a friend of Joseph, who lived beyond the hills of the city of Dothan. He was a wealthy man, and came from Bethlehem. Once I saw them pass the night under a shed, and then I saw them when thirty-six miles from the house of Zachary, remaining the whole night in the woods, in a hut made of branches covered with evergreen and beautiful white flowers, and used as a resting place for travelers. They did not go directly from Jerusalem to Jutta, but they made a circuit towards the East in order to travel with more quiet. They went around a small city, about six miles from Emmaus, and journeyed on a road often used by our Saviour during His public life. They had still two mountains to cross, between which I saw them rest once; they ate bread, and mixed a few drops of balsam, which they had taken with them, in the water to drink.

"The house of Zachary lay on a hill; other houses were built around in groups; not far from it a noisy torrent came rushing down the mountain sides. It had been revealed to Elizabeth in a dream that a relative of hers would become the mother of the promised Messiah; she had been constantly thinking of Mary, she longed to see her, and was almost sure that her cousin Mary had come from Nazareth; hence she went some distance to meet her.

"Elizabeth was a tall, aged woman with a sweet and placid face, and wore her head covered. She knew the Blessed Virgin only by report, but Mary, seeing her from afar, knew her at once, and hurried before Joseph, who modestly withdrew. They embraced at meeting, and in that moment I saw a light in the

Blessed Virgin which, like a ray, passed from her to Elizabeth, whereupon the latter was wonderfully touched. They did not remain in the presence of others, but went arm in arm towards the house, and at the entrance of the house Elizabeth again welcomed Mary, and both entered. Joseph, who, leading the ass, had now reached the dwelling, gave the animal in charge to one of the servants, and went through an open hall to meet Zachary. He humbly saluted the venerable priest who, embraced him, and conversed with him by writing upon a slate, for he had been dumb, since the time the Angel had appeared to him in the temple.

"Mary and Elizabeth, after having entered the door of the house, were in a hall which seemed to be also used as a kitchen. Here they again embraced, and Mary saluted Elizabeth by kissing her upon the cheek. Then again I saw a light passing from Mary over to Elizabeth, so that she became entirely penetrated and filled with holy joy, and stepping back with uplifted hands, and a face full of humility, joy, and inspiration, she exclaimed: *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb! Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy; and blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord.* (Luke 1 : 42–45.) Mary, however, crossed her hands upon her breast, and, divinely inspired, said: *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, because he hath regarded the humility of his hand-maid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed, because he that is mighty, hath done great things to me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is from generation to generation to them that fear him. He hath shewed might in his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble; he hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away; he hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy; as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever.* (Luke 1 : 46–55.)

"I saw Mary and Elizabeth afterwards at their occupations in the house; the Blessed Virgin assisted her cousin in all domestic affairs, and she prepared different articles of clothing for the expected child; I saw them both working together; they were knitting a large cover for Elizabeth; on the edges of the cover were sewed flowers and mottoes; they also prepared other things to be given to the poor at the birth of the child. Every morning and evening they repeated the Magnificat together.

"By the salutation of the Angel the Blessed Virgin was made the Church. By the words: *Behold the hand-maid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word*, the WORD, God, saluted by the Church, entered into her. God was now in His temple, and Mary was the temple and the ark of the covenant of the New Testament. In the salutation of Elizabeth, and in the leaping of

John in the womb of his mother, consisted the first service before this sanctuary. When, however, the Blessed Virgin sang the Magnificat, the Church of the new law celebrated for the first time the fulfillment of the divine promises of the old law; the Magnificat was the thanksgiving, the 'Te Deum' of the Church even before the birth of her Saviour.

"I saw the two blessed women generally stand opposite one another, when they said the Magnificat. During the prayer of Mary, I saw all her ancestors in a continued succession. I saw in the course of time thrice fourteen successive marriages in which the father was always the son of the preceding marriage, and from every one of these marriages I saw a ray of light descend upon Mary as she stood there praying. While, however, the whole representation appeared to me like a genealogical table of branches of light constantly growing brighter, I at length saw, in a certain place of this genealogical table of light, the immaculate and holy flesh and blood of Mary, of which the Son of God should be made, and I was filled with joy and hope like a child who sees the Christmas-tree growing beautiful before its eyes. The whole was a figure of the coming of Christ according to the flesh, and of His presence in the blessed Eucharist. It is inexpressible, how I saw from the beginning, from generation to generation, the approaching incarnation of Christ, and with it the approaching Eucharist. I knew then that the chanting of the genealogy of our Lord contained a deep and great mystery. I knew then, also, that as among the ancestors of Christ according to the flesh many were not Saints, but sinners, without ceasing to be steps of the ladder of Jacob, upon which God descended to mankind, and that in the same manner power remains even in unworthy Bishops to consecrate the Blessed Sacrament, and to ordain priests.

"I saw first the blessing of promise given by the Almighty to our first parents in Paradise, and from this blessing a ray of light fell upon the Blessed Virgin as she now, saying the Magnificat, stood opposite to St. Elizabeth. I then saw Abraham, who had received this blessing from God, and from him a ray of light fell upon the Blessed Virgin, then the other Patriarchs who carried within them the sanctuary of promise, and from each one the ray of light descended upon Mary, and at once I saw the passing of this blessing upon Joachim, who was greatly blessed in becoming the father of the Immaculate Virgin Mary. In her, however, is the Word, conceived by the Holy Ghost, made flesh, and it dwelt concealed in her, as in the ark of the new covenant, for nine months, until as we have seen, in the fullness of time, His glory was born of the Virgin Mary, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

BLESSED LANFRANC.

(July 3.)

"Transubstantiation."

LANFRANC was the son of a noble Italian family, and at first studied law; this, however, did not satisfy his active mind, and he, therefore, determined to study all the different branches of science. He crossed the Alps, took up his residence in a city of Normandy, and opened a school. Man, however, is never contented if he does not seek contentment in God alone, for after having obtained one desire of the heart, another soon arises. This was the case with Lanfranc; he soon resigned the care of his school, and went to Rouen, probably to seek a more extended field of labor. On his way he was obliged one night to pass through a forest where he was attacked by robbers who, after plundering and blindfolding him, tied his hands behind his back, led him off the road into a thicket, and left him.

Lanfranc at first grieved over his misfortune; he then wished to pray, but could not, because having been over-zealous in his studies, he had neglected his prayers. He made a vow that if God would now help him in his need, he would begin a new life, and serve God alone. Towards morning he heard persons passing by, and called for help; they came, and untieing him, led him back to the road. Lanfranc declared that he would enter a poor monastery, and asked if there was one in the neighborhood? They showed him the way to Bec where a poor monastery was building. He found the Abbot working with his own hands on it, and Lanfranc was at once received. He lived three years in the monastery, and spent his whole time in reading religious books and in praying. Although very learned, he was as humble as a child; once while reading at dinner, the Prior commanded him to pronounce a word differently from what he just done, although his pronunciation was correct. The Prior was a man of little learning, whereas Lanfranc surpassed in learning most of the literary men of that time; he, nevertheless, pronounced the word incorrectly according to the instruction of the Prior, for he justly considered it no sin to pronounce a long syllable short, but a sin to disobey his superior. It soon became known that Lanfranc was an inmate of the convent of Bec, and many scholars came from France, Germany, and Italy, to be instructed by him, and among them was St. Anselm. Seeing, however, that many of the monks led a life contrary to the rules of the abbey, he determined to leave them and become an hermit. Although he told no one of his purpose, Herluin, the Abbot, was advised of it by a deceased youth of his family, who communicated to him the intention of Lanfranc. Early in the morning the Abbot sent for Lanfranc, and told him that he regretted his determination of leaving the monastery. Lanfranc, greatly aston-

ished, asked the Abbot how he had heard of it; whereupon he told him of the apparition, and begged of him not to go away. Lanfranc was then chosen Prior, and was thus enabled to restore discipline and order.

The duke of Normandy, knowing the great mind and intellect of Lanfranc, always consulted him upon important affairs; this, however, created jealousy, so that Lanfranc was banished from the country, and the abbey-land wasted. A very lame horse was given Lanfranc upon which to make his journey. On his way he met the duke, and saluting him, said: "If your grace wishes me to get out of the country, you must give me a better horse." The duke smilingly replied: "Who ever asked a present from the judge who has just banished him?" Lanfranc made use of the occasion to prove his innocence; the duke acknowledged his hastiness, received Lanfranc again into his confidence, and promised compensation for all injuries done to the abbey. The duke had married a near relative, the daughter of the Count of Flanders, and the Pope declared the marriage invalid on account of the consanguinity. Lanfranc went to Rome at the duke's instance, and obtained a dispensation on the condition that the duke built an abbey for monks, and the duchess one for nuns, in which God would be worshiped day and night, and the souls of the founders prayed for. This was done, and the duke caused Lanfranc to be appointed Abbot of the convent of Caen. There the Abbot founded a school, and wrote several important works, and many who formerly studied at Bec came now to Caen, and the institution of Lanfranc became a nursery of Abbots and Bishops. Meanwhile he was elected Archbishop of Rouen, but out of humility he refused to accept the dignity. He, however, could not evade a still higher promotion. William, duke of Normandy, had in the year 1066 conquered England, and was there crowned king. Church and State were in such great confusion and disorder that the king determined to invite Lanfranc, who possessed his entire confidence, to England for the purpose of restoring peace and order, and he, therefore, with the consent of the Holy See, made him Primate of all England. The humble Abbot, however, refused to accept so high an office, although even desired to do so by the Pope. The king then persuaded Herluin, the Abbot of Bec, to command Lanfranc by virtue of his vow of obedience to accept the Archbishopric of Canterbury, which he finally did, though most reluctantly.

Arrived in England, he endeavored to introduce better order. By erecting schools, and restoring ecclesiastical discipline, he reformed the clergy, built churches, monasteries, hospitals, and asylums for the poor and strangers. He held several councils for the purpose of making wholesome regulations. Although possessed of immense revenues, he lived a most self-denying life; to others, however, he was extremely liberal. On several occasions he even showed that he had the gift of foretelling future events. An old record speaks thus of him: "Who can worthily describe his rare wisdom, his prudence, his kindness of heart, his honesty of action, and purity of soul? He was agreeable on account

of his cheerfulness, modest because of his humility, liberal in giving alms, Catholic in his faith, a restorer of the Christian religion, a supporter of the poor, a father of the orphan, and a consoler of the widow. Adorned with these and other virtues he kept the true faith, and ended his life by a happy death, for he who lives well cannot die badly."

Besides being a holy man, there is another reason why Lanfranc is honored in the Catholic Church even unto this day. There lived in France a proud and inconsiderate canon, named Berengarius, who, to gain notoriety, opposed the Catholic belief in the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. He wrote against the doctrine of transubstantiation or the real presence of Christ in the consecrated host, in the same manner as the founders of the Protestant schism, Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli, afterwards denied the consecration. Berengarius, like other heretics, insulted the Pope, and won adherents, among whom were even Bishops. Lanfranc wrote against this denial of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and he proved by the testimony of the Holy Fathers that the Catholic Church had always preserved this belief.

We will give a brief extract of his work, because it contains imperishable truths: "We believe that the temporal substances consecrated by the priest, are miraculously changed by the effects of omnipotence into the substance of the body of Christ, while the form and appearance of bread and wine yet remain, so that those who receive it may not be terrified, and the faithful deserve greater merit. This belief the Catholic Church spread throughout the world, and has kept from the earliest times until now, according to the words of the Lord: '*This is my body, which is given to you; this is the chalice of my blood, the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you and for many to the remission of sins.*' You will perhaps say, I see differently; how can I believe that I receive the body of Christ? We have examples by which we can see that a blessing has greater power than nature, because by a blessing even nature is changed. Moses had a rod in his hand; he threw it on the ground, and it was changed into a serpent; he again took it, and the nature of the rod returned. You see that by the grace dwelling in the Prophet, the nature of the serpent as well as that of the rod was changed. The same was done when the waters in Egypt were changed into blood, and then by the word of the Prophet the nature of the waters returned. If, however, the blessing of a man has such an effect that nature can thereby be changed, how much greater must be the effect of divine consecration in which the words of the Lord Himself are used; for the Blessed Sacrament which you receive is effected by the word of Christ. We read in the history of the creation of the world, that 'He spoke, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created.' (Ps. 32 : 9.) If the word of Christ, therefore, can create out of nothing that which did not before exist, why then can He not change that which exists into that which did not exist before?

"The Blessed Virgin gave birth to the Saviour against the order of nature,

and this body which is formed by consecration, is the body born of the Blessed Virgin. Why then do you inquire concerning the order of nature in the body of Christ, since against the order of nature the Lord Himself was born of the Blessed Virgin? And this real flesh and blood of Christ, coming from the Virgin, we receive in the Blessed Sacrament. This belief all Christians, Latins, Greeks, Armenians, or to whatever nation they belong, unanimously and cheerfully confess. Now, if the belief of the universal Church was false, there has never been a Catholic Church, or else she has been destroyed; but then the word of Christ would be false: 'Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.' (Matt. 28 : 20.) Whoever desires to be a member of the Church, should not renounce the faith and confession of the Church; the universal Church, however, confesses that the bread and wine upon the altar are changed in a wonderful and incomprehensible manner into the substance of flesh and blood. And this flesh of Christ is greater than all created substances, and excells all created beings. Although his flesh is truly eaten upon earth, and His blood truly drunk, He still is whole and entire, and sitting at the right hand of the Father in heaven until the fulfillment of time. If you ask me how this can be done, I simply answer: It is a mystery of faith, it is wholesome to believe, but fruitless to investigate. The true Christian will rather believe the divine mysteries now in order to obtain one day the merits of faith, than to set aside faith in the vain endeavor to comprehend that which cannot be comprehended.

"In conclusion, dear reader, we will add the following for your earnest consideration, especially when you attend Mass or receive Holy Communion. Our Lord appeared to the Jews in the form of a servant; he, however, who, like the thief, believes that Christ is the Son of God, shall be saved; but he who is scandalized at His humble appearance, and will not believe, shall be damned forever. To us, also, does the Lord appear in an humble form in the Holy Eucharist; every one of us must have our faith tried as had the Jews, when the Saviour appeared before them as a culprit: *either believe, and be saved; or refuse to believe, and be damned.*

"Christ offered Himself up on the cross for all; did He remember YOU also, did He suffer so much out of love to YOU, and for the atonement of YOUR sins? Yes, He did, and in order to prove it to you He gives, as a nourishment for your soul, the same body and the same blood which He offered up on the cross.

"The poorest beggar, the old woman on crutches, the most loathsome sick person in the hospital, the disgraced prisoner, the uncouth peasant living in a remote hamlet—all, all are invited by the Saviour to come to His table, are visited by Him in Holy Communion as a friend would visit a friend, as a prince would visit his favorite. If you, therefore, believe in the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, do not despise any one, because he is poor, simple, un-

couth, ignorant, or low, for He whom all nations respect, to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth, Him also must we respect."

ST. BERTHA.

(July 4.)

Christian Courtships."

During the reign of Clovis, king of France, there lived an excellent man, named Rigobert, upon whom the king, as a reward for his good qualities, conferred the title of count. His wife, Ursana, was an English lady of royal extraction. Both served God in justice, in prayer, and good works. A daughter was born to them whom they named Bertha. The child was very beautiful, and as she was the only daughter, her mother instructed and educated her with the greatest care. As soon as she had reached the proper age, select passages from the Scriptures were read and explained to her, in order that her mind and life might thereby be sanctified. The girl grew in piety and virtue, and became even more beautiful in spirit and soul than she was in body.

When she reached her eighteenth year, Bertha became renowned far and near, so that no maiden of her age could be compared with her. Sigisfrid, a relative of the king, heard of Bertha, and he determined to ask her hand in marriage. After having first implored the divine counsel, he went, attended by a princely retinue, to Count Rigobert, and, on arriving at Blangy, where Bertha lived, he earnestly besought her father not to refuse him his daughter in marriage. Rigobert consented, and appointed the day when Sigisfrid could claim Bertha as his wife. Bertha, who was already in spirit espoused to the heavenly Prince, now became the wife of a temporal prince, and after a few days she was led by Sigisfrid as his beautiful consort to his palace, accompanied by a magnificent retinue. Bertha was then twenty years old. Before proceeding further, dear reader, we deem it necessary to say a few words in regard to the present manner of contracting marriage. It was the custom in olden times, and is still in the East, never to ask the consent of the daughter when a marriage is in question; and when St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians writes about marriage, he does not speak of the will of the daughter, but of that of the father: "He that giveth his virgin (daughter) in marriage, doth well, and he that giveth her not, doth better." (1 Cor. 7 : 38.)

It is very different in our days. Daughters very seldom think it necessary to be advised by their parents; they declare that they intend consulting their

own hearts, and that it matters little to either father or mother whom they marry. But we will ask, are there fewer unhappy marriages now, than when it was customary for parents to dispose of the hands of their daughters? We believe the contrary. When young people are what they call engaged, they generally consider one another to be angels; but after becoming man and wife, they discover how blind they have been in regard to one another's faults. Passion is blind, and chooses blindly, whereas good and Christian parents generally know best, when and with whom a happy marriage can be contracted. As soon, therefore, as a virtuous girl is sought in marriage, she should inform her parents of it, before she gives her consent to the young man, and while her heart is yet at her own disposal. The parents can then after mature reflection determine whether the marriage is advisable or not. In such cases, also, the following commandment is to be observed: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayst be long-lived upon the land which the Lord, thy God, shall give thee." Courtships without the intention and expectation of soon marrying are entirely to be rejected.

Blessed Bertha lived for several years in great happiness with her husband; they had five daughters, all of whom proved their descent from so good and pious a mother by leading virtuous lives. Sigisfrid died in the Lord, and was solemnly buried in Blangy near the church. It was now Bertha's desire to place all her hope in God, and to give all her services to His cause; she, therefore, laid aside her rich dresses and precious jewels, and wore only woolen garments, and covered her head with a veil as is customary with nuns. After serious consideration she determined to build a church in honor of our Lord Jesus Christ and His blessed mother. The first edifice crumbled into ruins before it was finished, as a punishment upon Bertha, for the reason that she performed good actions in order to be seen and admired by the world; for God generally punishes with severity such sins of His elect. She then built a church in another place, and finished it; but before it was dedicated, Bertha went to visit a friend, named Rotrudis, who lived several miles distant. While conversing with one another on the newly built church, this edifice also fell into ruins, and the sound of its fall reached the heart of Bertha. Filled with consternation, she became pale, and trembled, so that Rotrudis asked her the reason of her dejection. Bertha answered that she had heard the second church also fall. While making preparation to return, a messenger came to acquaint her with what she by supernatural revelation already knew. Rotrudis, consoling her friend, said: "I hope, dear sister, that the Lord has selected another place for a new church; let us, therefore, by praying and fasting implore His mercy, that He may indicate to us the place where He would be pleased to have a convent erected to His honor. This the two pious women did; on the morning of the third day of their fast it was revealed to a friend of Bertha's that the church and convent should be built near the city of Blangy, on the river Thena, where lay four

stones in the form of a cross. Bertha with great rejoicings sought for the place, found the stones in the form of a cross, and at once made arrangements to commence the building for the third time. When the church and convent were finished, Bertha invited several Bishops, who dedicated the house of God with great solemnity and joy. Bertha, with two of her daughters, then took the vows, and received the veil together. Two of her daughters were already dead; but Gertrude and Deotila, animated by the example of their mother, had become very zealous, and formed the same resolution to become nuns. Emma, the third daughter, remained, however, in the world.

One of the highest officers of the king, named Ruodgar, a very proud and haughty man, instigated by Satan, visited Blangy, and demanded of blessed Bertha her daughter Gertrude in marriage. The mother refused, because Gertrude had been already espoused to the heavenly bridegroom. Ruodgar, however, declared that he would not leave the convent until he had seen Gertrude. Bertha then brought both her daughters, who were dedicated to God, into the church, accompanied by all the sisters of the convent; she placed them near the altar, had all the doors of the church opened, hymns chanted, and then sent for Ruodgar. When he arrived, Bertha said to him: "Behold, here is the servant and spouse of Christ; she has been received by the Bishop into the order; if you dare to take her away from the Lord, do so, for we women cannot resist you with the power of men, but God, our protector, will not forsake those who confide in Him."

Ruodgar, seized with fear, left the church at once, and, filled with anger, rode away, but not without threatening vengeance. He went to the king, and falsely accused Bertha of treason, and said that she had a private understanding with nations beyond the sea, to take possession of the country. The king rashly believed this false accusation, and commanded the servant of God to be at once brought to the palace. St. Bertha, confiding in the help of God, undertook the journey in a manner becoming her position. Ruodgar, seeing this, compelled her to change her horse for a poor one, and in this manner ride to the palace. This was at that time considered very insulting to a lady of birth and dignity. Ruodgar was there when she entered, and looked down upon her with contempt, when suddenly he became blind. The courtiers considered this as a punishment of God, in consequence of which the king, regretting what he had done, asked pardon of the venerable Abbess, and allowed her to return in peace.

Bertha afterwards built several churches; but in order to be more retired from the world, and to serve God with greater devotion, she had a cell built on the right side of the church from which she could see the high-altar through a window. When sixty-nine years old, she felt death approaching, and hearing the words: "Come, daughter! come, daughter!" her soul was received by the Angels.

ST. MARINA.

(July 5)

"Purgatory."

It is said that the sufferings of purgatory are indescribable, but that the soul at the same time enjoys great consolation and love for God. This seems to be a contradiction and an impossibility: for it is difficult to believe that the soul of man can be sensible of great pain and great comfort at the same moment; can possess the love of God and yet be chastised by Him, and love above all things Him who inflicts the pains. In the life of St. Marina it will be seen how Almighty God permits a soul possessing His grace and love to be tormented, how pain and consolation can be united, and how the very sufferings only purify the soul.

Three hundred years ago there lived in Spain a celebrated advocate named Diego Escobar; the fourth child of his marriage was a daughter, called Marina. Her father's sister spoke to her of God, and when only three years old, Marina often said: "I love God more than I do my father or mother, more than my aunt, and more than all things." The child grew up quietly and piously until her tenth year; from that time Marina describes her own life:

"When about ten years old, I chose as a friend a frivolous and wicked girl of my own age, whose bad habits I soon adopted. I commenced to dress and adorn my hair, indulge in idle and improper language, neglect my former devotions, and this worldly life I led for the space of four years. A priest, related to my parents, a pious man by whose holy admonitions every one in the family improved, was the means of leading me, the lost sheep, back again to my heavenly Father. In a few months I freed myself from my bad habits: I attended to my devotions, read good books, and tried to practice what I read; I meditated upon and felt sorry for my sins, made a careful confession, was obedient to my parents, practiced works of penance, fasted, watched, and prayed.

After some time Satan awakened in me the most violent scruples, and I became disheartened, weak, and miserable; my soul was tormented so that it had no rest, and if God had not protected and preserved me, I should have lost my mind. Even my confessor could not help me, for the Great Physician desired me to suffer, because my soul would in such a manner be purified. These sufferings lasted from my fourteenth until my twenty-eighth year."

Marina then relates the various ways by which God led her to the path of salvation, and the manner in which she received supernatural light from above. We will select from her writings, passages in which she describes her sufferings:

"Nothing makes me more miserable than to see how kindly God has

treated me; for if I think of all my sins and faults, I blush, and think that I must appear to God like a wretched beggar. For this, however, God consoles and strengthens me. Who would imagine, that two such opposite elements as fire and water could be united; and yet the great God can do this; I find it within myself; He gives me the knowledge that I am the frailest and most wretched of creatures, full of sins and misery, and not able to accomplish the least thing pleasing in His sight, and nevertheless out of His infinite mercy He gives me as much confidence and love, as though I were rich in merit, and had done nothing but promote His honor.

"I suffered great pain, anguish, and grievance in my body, and at the same time cruel sadness oppressed my soul. I resigned myself to the will of God and said to Him: 'My God and my All! I suffer in darkness and have violent pains and sadness; I am, however, contented, because Thou seest and hast decreed that I should love these torments, and I therefore thankfully accept them. Let Thy will be done in me!' On one Friday-night I was consumed by such a fever that I could neither sleep nor rest. I beheld the Majesty of God, and He looked with compassion upon me, and said: 'My child, what has befallen you?' and I answered: 'My Lord, Thou seest I suffer great pains and I am distressed with inward anguish.' The Lord replied: 'Your sickness is not unto death, but only that I may be glorified in your sufferings.' Then I said: 'O Lord, when I suffer so many pains in my body and so much uneasiness in my soul, I imagine that I am not loved by Thee; because Thou concealest thyself from me.' The Lord answered: 'Think you that I did not love my Son, when I gave Him over into the hands of sinners? In truth I loved Him, and so do I love you.' The Lord one day called to me and said: "Which do you prefer, to suffer pain and adversity, or to regain your health?' I answered: 'My Lord, if it is Thy will, I would rather die and suffer through all eternity, than live and enjoy good health.' The Lord, however, interrupted me, and said: 'Not forever, but only for a short time shall you suffer.' On another occasion I suffered so intensely for four days, that I had no rest by day or night, and thought that I would die. Then I said to the divine Majesty: 'My Lord, I desire to love Thee with my whole heart, and even if I knew that I should be cast into hell and damned, I would love and serve Thee with all my strength, because Thou deservest to be infinitely loved, on account of Thy goodness.' - Sometimes my body and my soul appear to me to be like a beast fallen under a heavy burden, and unable to rise. At such times the body and soul, loaded with misery and pain, are darkened, so that suffering appears terrible. When in this condition I call upon God and offer myself up to His will. I live on the cross, and desire not to be freed from it, and when the Lord offers me consolation and comfort, I say: No, dear Lord, if it be Thy will, defer it until another time!' Once, when Satan tormented me, and I could not find the slightest comfort, I said: 'O my Lord, tell me the cause of this great suffering, and why Thou hast forsaken me?

Tell me, my only Good, what have I done to be so displeasing in Thy sight?' I said this with tears and sighs, not that it was difficult for me to suffer for His sake;—for this is sweet and agreeable to me—but my pain was caused by my great love for Him. The divine Majesty only answered: 'Tell me what *I* ever did, to have been so abused and to have suffered such horrible torments out of love to you?' Once He said to me: 'The faults of those who truly love me, become in the fire of love like chaff in a large furnace; nothing remains of it, but the ashes of humility and the knowledge of oneself, under which the burning coals of divine love are kept."

During the last thirty years of her life, Marina was confined to her bed, suffering constantly from pain and illness; her fingers were contracted, and her body wasted away; her room resembled a dark prison, for as she could not bear the light, the shutters were always closed. Other pious women lived with her, some of whom gave testimony of Marina. One of them said: "I always remarked in Marina such purity, earnestness, and recollectedness, that wondering I said to myself: It is not possible that she is a woman, she must be an Angel. I never saw her angry, although she had often cause for anger. She admonished and punished us by her looks alone which penetrated our hearts, and threw us into confusion. She spoke as earnestly and emphatically as though God had been in her soul, and had spoken through her. Her advice made us quiet and peaceable, and removed from us all unnecessary scruples."

Marina and her companions lived upon the alms of others. In the beginning they had hardly sufficient to keep themselves alive; afterwards, however, they were blessed with abundance, so that this poor virgin, although lying sick in bed, became a nurse of the poor, and her house a refuge to the needy and oppressed. "Nothing of what I have is mine," said she, "all belongs to God; I am only a poor steward."

Her confessor also says of her as follows: "She used to say that her soul was like a little bird, tied by a string to the cage, so much did her soul desire to burst the fetters of the body, and be with God. Sometimes she would sigh, and exclaim: 'O how long does the little while of God last!' During her last illness she was attacked with the most violent pains in her bones. Those who were present could do nothing for her but weep, that so holy a creature had to suffer so much. The priest who attended her, sometimes questioned her in regard to the condition of her soul, and she answered: 'Father, God tries me by great obscurity and dereliction; but His holy will be done in me, although all possible pains may come over me in His name.'"

Marina was very modest and prudent, so that she seldom complained of her sufferings. At length her pains ceased, and she fell into an ecstacy in which state she could not without great difficulty answer any question; but when the priest asked her if she thought of God, she replied: "On that score all is well with me!"

After having remained in the ecstacy for several hours, she gave up her loving and beloved soul into the hands of Her God, whom she had faithfully served for eighty years upon earth.

ST. GODOLEVA.

(July 6.)

"The kingdom of God.

GODOLEVA was the daughter of a nobleman in the Netherlands; she possessed qualities which rendered her pleasing to God and man; she was very handsome, had an active and cultivated mind, and what is better, her conduct was noble and her life saintly, so that she justly merited the name of Godoleva, that is, God-love. When she had attained a proper age, many suitors sought her hand. A nobleman of Flanders, named Bertulf, made special efforts to win her, and at last succeeded. Bertulf, although a noble by birth, was a bad and wicked man. Almighty God seemed to have permitted this marriage, in order to reward his beloved daughter for the wonderful patience she exhibited in living with so cruel and passionate a man, for "to those who love God, all things work together unto good."

Bertulf, as if suddenly possessed by the devil, changed his love into hatred, as soon as he had brought his newly married wife home. As is sometimes the case, his mother fanned the flame of hatred against her daughter-in-law, and she once said to her son: "Why did you marry such a crow from the Netherlands; was there no maiden here among us worthy of you?" She used these insulting epithets, because Godoleva had black hair and eyes, for at that time (the eleventh century) nearly all the people belonging to Flanders had fair hair and blue eyes. The words of the Apostle were fulfilled in Godoleva: "And all who will live piously in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3 : 12);" and another passage: "Gold and silver are tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation." (Ecclus. 2 : 5.)

Her husband insulted her cruelly; even during the wedding-feast he stayed away, for he did not wish to see one whom he hated; the mother-in-law, however, presided at the feast; outwardly she was kind, but inwardly she was full of wrath. In deference to the guests she endeavored to conceal her hateful disposition, but in vain; for the face, which is the image of the soul and the silent speech of the heart, exposed the secrets of her soul. At the end of three days, when the guests had all departed, Bertulf returned, but did not stay, for the aversion he had conceived against his wife caused him to withdraw again, and

he left her alone in the house with the servants, and went to live in his father's house. Godoleva took care of her domestic affairs, lived like a widow, and although hated by her husband, was dear to the heart of the Saviour. Her conduct was without reproach, and so pure that even ill-disposed persons found it impossible to discover any cause of blame against her. In order not to lose by idleness the freshness and virtue of the soul, she was constantly occupied in labor and prayer; this was the protection she used against the snares of Satan, that is, against all evil thoughts, by which young persons are so often attacked. During the night also she wept and prayed that divine grace would enlighten the blind and hardened heart of her husband: the words of the prophet were thereby fulfilled in her: "Every night I will wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears." (Ps. 6 : 7.) But Bertulf, incited by the evil spirit and by his own mother, became daily more bitter and more incensed towards his wife. In order to wound her feelings more, he appointed one of his servants steward of the estate, so that Godoleva, bereft of her title and rights, was kept like a slave. Bertulf commanded the steward to give her daily at a certain hour a small portion of the necessaries of life, and he threatened to punish him severely, if he did not obey him. Thus the servant of Christ was subject to a servant, whom it was her right to command. It is well known how servants act towards those who are hated and despised by their masters; and so it was in the case of Godoleva; she was loaded with insults, injuries and mockeries; she never murmured, but calmly and quietly suffered all according to the word of Christ: "In your patience you shall possess your souls." (Luke 21 : 19.) She gave thanks to God for the bread she received, ate the half of it with salt and water, and gave the rest to the poor.

She prayed for her husband who cursed her, and for all her enemies and persecutors. But when Bertulf saw that Godoleva did not die of hunger, misery, and grief, as he had hoped, he conceived the thought of putting her to death privately; for he feared the wrath of her powerful relatives. He therefore commanded the steward to give her only half as much bread as had been formerly given her. She, however, endured with resignation this new oppression, and although knowing that it was difficult to live upon so little, she determined to give to God what she had promised; she therefore continued to give the half of her scanty meals to the poor. In such manner, with her wants increased also the fervor of her devotions. Her prayer was: "O Lord, Creator of all things, remember my frailty, and forsake me not in this my time of tribulation. O Lord, Thou hast promised to save those who confide in Thee, strengthen me then in the present attack of enemies, and although my husband refuses to me the half of my former portion of bread, withdraw not from me Thy love and kindness, and grant that I may always please Thee by the offering of true piety."

Not only did those who knew Godoleva's charity and patience, love her,

but those also who only knew her by reputation were filled with compassion for her sufferings. Bertulf, on the contrary, who had already been as cruel and inhuman as it was possible for man to be, endeavored to invent more torments for his innocent wife. At length the persecution which Godoleva was compelled to suffer from her brutal husband and his wicked relatives, became so insupportable, that she was forced to escape as if from wild beasts; for every Christian is bound to preserve his life, if duty does not command him to sacrifice it. Barefooted and accompanied by but one servant, she arrived at her paternal home, and with tears related to her father all that had befallen her. He was deeply moved at hearing all that his poor child had suffered, and at once considered what was best for him to do under the circumstances. After having consulted with his friends, he applied to Baldwin, Count of Flanders, told him of the injuries and injustice his daughter had been compelled to suffer from the hands of her husband, and asked that justice should be done her. Baldwin referred him to the Bishop of the diocese, as being a case which the Church alone could settle; he, however, promised, that if Bertulf should refuse to obey the decision of the spiritual authority, he would then force him to obey. The Bishop examined the case and decided that Bertulf should take back his legitimate wife, and as the Count of Flanders also insisted upon it, Bertulf promised to treat her kindly for the future. Although Godoleva justly thought that a man like Bertulf could not be forced to love, she nevertheless went back to him; but affairs soon became worse instead of better; for Bertulf now firmly resolved to get rid of his wife, in such a manner, however, that neither he nor his relatives could be accused of murder. Godoleva seeing that her husband meditated some new design against her, prayed to the Lord, whom the wind and sea obey, to help her in the coming struggle.

Some of Bertulf's friends even reproached him for his conduct towards his wife; but Godoleva, on the contrary, hearing those who pitied her use harsh language in reference to her husband, rebuked them, saying: "Dear friends, you must not curse my husband, but bless him; for the divine commandment tells us, not to revile those who persecute us, but to bless and pray for our enemies, and not to render evil for evil, but to overcome evil by good." (Matt. 5 : 44; Rom. 12 : 14–21.) Others expressed their regret at her being forsaken and denied the pleasures of this world; but she said to them: "I do not desire the empty pleasures and joys of the world; for what would it profit me to nourish and pamper my mortal body, that must soon return to dust? The glory of man is like the grass that withers and fades away." An old monk, named Drogo, who wrote the life of Godoleva, astonished at such spiritual strength, makes the following beautiful remark: "Is not this blessed woman to be compared to a diamond? For as the diamond, when struck by the hammer, does not break, so she when encompassed by snares, tormented by injuries, and ill-treat-

ment, was neither disturbed nor disheartened, for she was founded upon a rock, the rock being Christ."

Full of anger, because hunger and insult were not sufficient to kill the pious servant of God, Bertulf pondered on the best means to cause her death. He confided his intention to two of his servants, named Lambert and Hakka, and consulted them as to the surest and safest method. Together they devised a plan easy to put into execution, but difficult to discover, and they appointed the time when the murder should take place.

The day at length arrived on which Godoleva was to suffer death, but on which she would also be glorified before God. Just as the sun was setting, Bertulf went to visit his wife in her room, and as if entirely changed, he addressed her in the most friendly manner, kissed her, and sat near her, all the while harboring thoughts of murder in his heart. When Godoleva evinced her fear and distrust at his appearance, he took her by the hand, drew her towards him, and spoke to her kindly and tenderly.

Dear reader, that you may understand the purport of his conversation, it will be necessary for us to remark that in the middle ages there existed the common belief that by means of witchcraft, feelings of hatred and aversion could be produced between married people, but that there was also a remedy by which this spell could be dissolved, and made ineffective. Bertulf made use of this superstition, and said to Godoleva: "I am very sorry that I have appeared so harsh and repulsive to you, and that my conversation and presence are so disagreeable to you; I do not know what evil star rules over us that we should have lived so unhappily together; a wicked spirit must have power over us, but I am firmly resolved to put an end to such a state of things, and to treat you henceforth as my beloved wife. I have found a person who declares that she possesses the power to unite our hearts in love. I have confided the management of this affair to my faithful servants, Lambert and Hakka, they will arrange a meeting with the person, and you may place entire confidence in them." Godoleva replied: "I am a servant of God, I leave all to Him; I will consent to what you say, if it can be done without committing sin." Bertulf then left her, mounted his horse, and rode to Brugge, intending to stay there all night, and wait until the death of his wife was announced to him; for in this way he hoped to avert the suspicion of being her murderer.

During the night, after Godoleva and the whole household had retired, Lambert and Hakka came to her door, and told her that the person of whom her husband had spoken, was waiting at the gate to see her. Godoleva made the sign of the cross, and recommended herself to the Almighty, and when she commenced to dress, the two servants prevented her, saying: "You must come bare-footed and with flowing hair, and clothed with but one garment; for thus only can you meet with success; all must be done at the midnight hour." Godoleva acceded to their request, and said: "I give myself up to Almighty God,

I am His creature; He may in His mercy do according to His will." She then rose, and left the house with the servants. While proceeding towards the gate, they were very respectful in their behavior, but suddenly they seized her, and strangled her. They then plunged her body into a pond of water in order to make sure of her death. The wretches then carried the murdered woman back to her room, placed her on the bed, and covered the body with the bed-clothes. When it was day, and the sun had risen high, the servants of the castle were astonished that their mistress had not yet made her appearance, for it was her custom to rise before dawn, and go to church. They all wondered at her delay, but would not awaken her, thinking she was perhaps unwell or that she had overslept herself. At length, frightened by her prolonged absence, they went to her sleeping apartment to awaken her, but found her dead. The news spread far and wide, and the neighbors assembled. The body was examined, but nowhere could the least trace of violence be discovered except a little red mark upon the throat. Some, therefore, maintained that she had died a natural death, while others asserted the contrary.

We will now relate what became of Bertulf, and how God glorified His servant Godoleva by many miracles. You would perhaps rejoice, dear reader, at hearing that the wicked Bertulf came to a terrible end in punishment for his cruelty; but we ask you, is it probable that those who have gained heaven become less holy than when walking upon earth? Godoleva, when alive, prayed in her virtuous kindness for Bertulf even while suffering from ill-treatment; should she not then, when freed from her earthly prison, pray for his conversion and pardon? Let us see.

Bertulf, whom no one suspected of having murdered his wife, soon married again. The first child of the second marriage, a girl, was born blind. The water into which Godoleva had been submerged, was found to cure various diseases, so that many who drank of it recovered miraculously. The daughter of Bertulf, when grown up, bathed her eyes in the water, and, behold, she received her sight. Out of gratitude she built a convent for nuns near the spot for the glory of God, and in honor of St. Godoleva. The greatest miracle, however, was worked upon Bertulf himself. Every one despised and cursed him on account of his barbarity and cruelty, but his good and pious wife looked down from heaven with merciful eyes on him who was the cause of her sufferings upon earth, but also of her glorification in heaven. Through her intercession and merits she obtained from Almighty God the sincere conversion of Bertulf. He watered her grave with tears, and implored her to pray that the Lord would show him how to do penance for the rest of his life. He then resolved to visit the abbey of St. Winnoc, ask for a cell, and there lead an austere and penitential life. Arrived at the gate of the abbey, he fell upon his knees, and asked for a corner in the house in which to live secluded from the world. Even the monks were touched, and wept when they saw this once ferocious wolf

changed into a meek lamb. Their astonishment, however, increased when they saw the austerity practiced by Bertulf; the once dissipated man was now satisfied with a little piece of bread; formerly devoted to gambling, hunting, and other pleasures, he now sought seclusion; instead of a soft bed, he lay upon the bare floor; instead of grandeur and wealth he now chose poverty. The principal instrument of his penance was a shirt made of steel which he wore next to his body, whereby the flesh was so terribly lacerated that, after his death, it was found to adhere to his skin, and consequently was buried with him. After many years, when his grave was opened, his body and the shirt-of-mail were found in a state of perfect preservation.

Bertulf is united now in heaven with his wife whom he hated, and whom he finally murdered. While meditating her death, he once told Godoleva in a malicious manner that they could be made to love one another most fervently by secret means. Godoleva found and used the remedy—her own intercession in heaven. The spirit of Christ, and the kingdom of the Saints is such that they, as members, do what Christ, their Head, has done. Our Saviour upon the cross prayed for his murderers so effectually that many were converted, and obtained heaven. Godoleva did the same with her greatest enemy, and obtained heaven for him. Praised be Jesus Christ, now and forever. Amen.

ST. WILLIBALD.

(July 7.)

"Palestine."

On the twenty-fifth of February we celebrated the feast of St. Walpurgis, the sister of St. Willibald. Both were of noble descent. When Willibald reached his third year, he was taken dangerously ill, and his disconsolate parents carried him to a cross, erected on a hill, and, laying him before it, fervently implored the Lord to preserve the life of their son, at the same time making a vow to dedicate him to the service of God. Their prayers were heard, and the child was soon restored to health. He gave promise of great talent even in his fifth year, and was sent to Egilward, Abbot of Waltham, there to be instructed. He advanced in knowledge as he grew in age, but what was better his soul was filled with the love of God, and all the monks of the abbey were devoted to him on account of his great obedience and meekness. When he had reached the age of manhood, having become almost perfect in his self-denial and renunciation of

the world, he feared to return home on account of the high position occupied by his parents, for he knew that he would be treated with honor and respect. He, therefore, determined to go out into the world, poor and unknown, for Christ's sake, and having obtained his father's permission to do so, he entreated him also to go with him, and to seek God alone far from their former friends and country. The father replied that it would be inhuman and cruel in him to leave wife and children; but Willibald told him that nothing should be preferred to the love of God, and that this cruelty for Christ's sake was better than love for his family, and that those only who despise the world, would be made the co-heirs of Christ. By the force of Willibald's representations and persuasions, the father, his second son Wunibald, and other friends, were induced to enrol themselves under the banner of the heavenly King. The little band then embarked, and, after a safe voyage, landed in France, whence they started for Rome; but when they reached the city of Lucca, the father fell ill and died, thus obtaining, after a short period of endurance, the reward for his resolution to serve God alone. Having buried the father, the sons, continuing their journey amidst many difficulties and dangers, finally arrived in Rome. There they visited all the holy places, daily offering themselves up in spirit to the Lord. They remained in the city from St. Martin's day until Easter, when both were attacked by a violent fever from which it took some time to recover. Willibald was not deterred, however, from undertaking greater and even more difficult tasks; his intention was to become a monk of the strictest order, but before entering a monastery, he desired to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He found pious men willing to accompany him, and very soon after they had formed their resolution, an Egyptian ship was ready. It is unnecessary to mention the places which they visited, but only what happened to them when not far from Jerusalem. At Edessa, a city of Syria, there was at that time a large Catholic Church, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, in which his head was shown. Here Willibald and his companions were seized by the Saracens, and, under the pretext of their being spies from a strange country, they were imprisoned. The hand of God, however, protected them, for He so moved the heart of a merchant in the city that he had compassion on the strange prisoners, and offered to redeem them with money, but his offer was not accepted. The merchant then sent them food every day, and did all in his power to comfort them; he obtained permission for them to go to church on Sundays, and when he knew that they desired anything which was for sale in the city, he would buy it for them. A Spaniard once came to the prison to visit them, and when they told him from whence they had come, and what had befallen them, he endeavored to procure their release. The Spaniard's brother held a high office under the Saracen government, and both went to the king, and told him what had happened to the men from the West, that they were harmless pilgrims unjustly imprisoned. The king set Willibald and his companions at liberty without any ransom. They at once con-

tinued their journey towards Damascus, where Ananias had baptized Paul after his conversion: and they visited the church near Damascus, erected on the spot where the Lord had said to the persecutor of the Christians: "Saul, Saul, why persecuted thou me?" From thence they went to Nazareth in Galilee, where the Angel had saluted the Blessed Virgin Mary, and announced to her that she should become the Mother of God. Upon this place also stands a church. Three miles distant from it is Cana; there they saw an altar in the church which was made out of one of the six water-pots in which the Lord had changed water into wine. Near Cana is mount Tabor where our Lord was transfigured, they ascended it, and on the top found an abbey of monks, and a church dedicated to Moses and Elias. After having performed some acts of devotion, they went to the sea of Genesareth where our Saviour had walked on the waters, and stilled the tempest. As the river Jordan takes its course directly through the sea of Genesareth, they visited on its shore the places mentioned in sacred history—Tiberias, Magdala, Capharnaum, Bethsaida, and Corazaim. Walking along the shore of the river, they came to the place where St. John had baptized our Lord; there they found a church built upon piles, and under the church a crypt where the priest of that time baptized. A few miles from the Jordan is the site of ancient Jericho, and near at hand the spring of Eliseus, called so after the Prophet who, by a miracle, changed this once poisonous spring into a wholesome and sweet one; it is even yet to be found, and is filled with delicious water by which the barren country is supplied.

In less than one day's journey one can go from Jericho to Jerusalem. On mount Calvary stood a church, and outside of it were three crosses, in memory of those upon which our Saviour and the two thieves had hung. Near by was the holy sepulchre, and over it was built a beautiful chapel in which fifteen golden lamps burned day and night. At the entrance of the sepulchre was a large square block of stone which is supposed to be the same which the Angel had removed. Willibald arrived there on St. Martin's day, but became ill, and remained so until Christmas. When he recovered he visited the valley of Josaphat, lying at the foot of the mountain upon which Jerusalem stands. In that valley was a church in which the grave of the Blessed Mother of God was shown; Mary is said to have been buried there, but her body was taken by the Angels, and carried into Paradise. Immediately on the other side of the valley rises the mount of Olives; below was a church built over the place where our Saviour had prayed on the eve of His Passion; on the top of the mountain, from which our Lord ascended into heaven, was a church, in the centre of which was a square-box of metal, and in it was a burning lamp over which was placed a glass, so that the rain might not extinguish the light, as the church had an open roof through which the heavens could be seen. Two pillars also stood in the church in memory of the two men in white garments, who said to the Apostles: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven?" From this place Willibald

went to the valley of Bethlehem, where the Angel appeared to the shepherds; it is only six miles from Jerusalem. Immediately on the elevation above the valley is Bethlehem. The birth-place of Christ was a cave, but it has been excavated, and changed into a chapel, over which a magnificent church is built in the form of a cross. When Willibald and his companions had finished their devotion in these places, they searched for the convent of St. Sabas. Around the convent the mountains, like great walls, rise to an immense height, and in the rocks were many small caves in which hermits and monks dwelt. Having left this place, St. Willibald was severely tried by the Almighty, for he became blind when at Mass. Two months elapsed before his companions again met him in Jerusalem; but when he was led into the church, which stands over the place where the holy cross was found, he again received his sight.

From Jerusalem they went to Joppe, where Peter had resuscitated the widow Dorcas, and where now stands a church erected in his honor; they also visited the well where the Saviour asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water; in that time a church was built over the well. Not far from this they reached the former Samaria which was afterwards called Sebaste. It is believed that St. John the Baptist, and Eliseus, the Prophet, are buried there. They then traveled along the sea-shore towards the north until they reached mount Libanus, which rises to such an elevation that its highest tops are covered with eternal snow. When about to return they were obliged to wait a long time for an opportunity. Finally they engaged passage in a ship whose destination was Constantinople, which city was not then, as now, in possession of the Turks. During their passage they had very unfavorable weather, so that it took them nearly the whole winter to go from the coast of Syria to Constantinople. Two years had elapsed before Willibald was able to return to the West; it was when the Pope had sent an ambassador to the emperor of Constantinople, on which occasion St. Willibald accompanied the embassy back to Italy. He landed safely in Italy after an absence of eight years.

Whatever is related above of the travels of St. Willibald in Palestine, was written down according to his own statement by a nun of the convent of which his sister Walpurgis was Abbess. It is, however, more than a thousand years (730 after Christ), since this journey was made. What has meanwhile become of the Holy Land? The holy places are still held in veneration by the Christians, but the Turks are now masters of the land, and many things have changed for the worse since the time when St. Willibald visited the East. Nothing is now to be seen of the church near Damascus, where the Lord appeared to Saul; the inhabitants of Damascus are very hostile to Christians. The church in Nazareth was also destroyed by the Turks, but is now rebuilt; the church in Cana is at present only a heap of stones. On mount Tabor the great square blocks of stone, and the large open spaces attest the former existence of magnificent edifices, but they, too, were long ago destroyed by the Turks; not even

a hut is visible there. According to the statement of St. Willibald, many churches were to be found in Tiberias on the sea; but they were long since destroyed, and only lately a small church has been erected there. No Catholics are in the place except one Franciscan, who, with a lay-brother, lives in the church to offer up the holy sacrifice of the Mass. A heap of stones marks the site of Capharnaum. The church has disappeared where John baptized the Lord. Between Jericho and Jerusalem, St. Willibald found the convent of St. Eustace, but now even its site is scarcely known. There is now in Jerusalem a larger church than there was in the time of St. Willibald; the structure encloses mount Calvary, and the holy sepulchre; the Turks, however, are masters of it, and guard the entrance, so that Christian pilgrims are obliged to pay for admission. On the mount of Olives, where the magnificent Church of the Ascension once stood, is a Turkish mosque, and a small village inhabited by Turks. Where St. John is said to be buried, a wall of square blocks with arches is yet visible; a grand Gothic cathedral formerly covered the spot, but the Turks have destroyed nearly the entire building, and in the basement they have built a mosque which they do not allow Christians to enter. The well of Jacob near Sichem is still in existence, but not a trace of the church except some stones lying around in confusion. As it was a thousand years ago, so it is now; people rule over the country who do not believe in Christ, and but very few Christians can be found there.

It seems as though the blessing of God has been taken forever away from the land, because its inhabitants despised and trampled under foot the most costly pearl, the most holy and precious gift that Almighty God could give them—His only Son, JESUS CHRIST. There are but few Christians in Jerusalem, and on the mount Gerizim no one can be found who worships God in truth—but He is worshiped far from Palestine. St. Willibald, after his return to Italy, entered the Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino, and led such an edifying life that all the inmates regarded him with love and veneration. Having spent ten years there, he was called by Pope Gregory III., and by request of St. Boniface (see June 29), was sent to Germany in order to assist him there. St. Willibald showed such fervent zeal and skill in propagating Christianity that St. Boniface consecrated him Bishop of Eichstedt, Bavaria; this city, however, had been destroyed and devastated by the Huns, so that but a small church and a few houses remained.

St. Willibald gathered men around him who, like himself, were determined and prepared to sow seeds of the Gospel of Christ. The wilderness was cleared, the earth plowed and cultivated; churches and monasteries were erected, prayer and hymns of praise ascended to heaven; the word of God was preached, but Willibald excelled all by his piety, temperance, patience, meekness, modesty, and charity.

After successfully laboring in the vineyard of the Lord, St. Willibald died

at the age of seventy-seven. A church in Eichstedt, erected in his honor, still preserves the relics of the Saint.

ST. ISABELLA.

(July 8.)

*Peace maker

In the year 1235, St. Elizabeth, the venerated countess of Hessia, was canonized. Thirty-six years later a daughter was born to Peter, king of Arragon in Spain, and as Violenta, the grandmother of the child, was a step-sister of St. Elizabeth, the little one was baptized Elizabeth, or as it is called in Spanish, Isabella. Even as a child, Isabella found no pleasure in youthful sports, fine dresses or amusements; her only joy was in praying and in performing acts of mercy. Her father was often heard to say that his kingdom was blessed for the piety and virtue of his daughter.

When Isabella grew up, several princes asked her in marriage; for different reasons the father thought proper to bestow her hand upon Dennis, king of Portugal, although he felt sad at being forced to part with his dear child. Isabella was very young when she married, but the fact of her being a queen did not cool the ardor of her piety; on the contrary, she spent her time in prayer, assisting the poor, and in nursing the sick, and she presided over her court, as though she were a woman of mature age.

After Isabella had lived several years in harmony with the king, her husband, and had become the mother of two children, he became unfaithful to her. Although the queen knew of his wickedness, and others even told her of it, she remained calm and meek, as though it concerned her not; she kept silence, prayed, read, or was employed with her court-ladies in working articles for the Church. Her patience was so heavenly and so great, that she educated at her own expense the illegitimate children of her wicked husband, and treated them as kindly as if they had been her own. The king could less resist this noble and Christian conduct of his wife, than if she had lamented and reproached him, and he therefore acknowledged his wrong and again became faithful to her. Many years after her death, when she was about to be canonized, her life was strictly examined and a true report of it made, in which the following principal virtues practiced by her, were enumerated:

Her faith. Isabella spent whole days in devotion, and after the death of her husband, she was engaged even a part of the night in prayer. Before the

dawn of day she heard one Mass, a little later she would hear two more, and the remainder of the day, after having performed works of charity and mercy, she employed in reading, meditation, and prayer.

HER HOPE. Although surrounded by royal power and riches, Isabella never depended upon them, but placed her hope in Him, from whom she expected life everlasting. In sufferings and tribulations therefore she took refuge in God alone.

HER LOVE FOR GOD, of which her whole life gave testimony; hence, her perfect contempt of the world and her hatred for sin, so that she felt as sorely grieved, when she heard God offended, as though she had been personally insulted. Her love to God was such, that the severest works of penance, fasting, watching, and pilgrimages she most cheerfully accomplished.

HER CHARITY. Besides serving God she was constantly employed in charitable works, and she founded several benevolent institutions; she not only paid for thirty persons, who were in the poor-house, but she also visited them, conversed with them and served them. None who asked her for alms, were ever sent away empty-handed; and if she suspected that any one was ashamed to beg, but was in need, she would find means to give relief without being solicited. She was therefore very justly looked upon as the foster-mother of all.

HER JUSTICE. Although very kind and merciful, Isabella showed great zeal in punishing the guilty.

HER FORTITUDE. She practiced this virtue, when her husband became unfaithful to her, when her son rebelled against his father, when she lost her nearest and dearest relatives, and in time of adversity.

HER TEMPERANCE. From her youth she observed *four lents* through the year: the *first* one kept by her was that prescribed by the Church: the *second*, the whole time of Advent: the *third*, from the feast of St. John the Baptist until the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and the *fourth*, immediately after the Assumption until St. Michael's day. She never tasted anything but bread and water on Fridays and Saturdays, and in fact ate so little at all times, that she seemed more like a spirit than like an earthly being.

HER HUMILITY. Isabella, although a queen, was as humble as a servant; she nursed the sick, and on every Friday she invited to her palace thirteen poor persons, who were afflicted by diseases; there she would wash their feet and give them alms. But if we compare the virtues of St. Isabella, the prominent one will be PEACE-MAKING.

When Isabella saw the king's anger excited against any one of his subjects on account of their having spoken against him, she made strenuous efforts to subdue his wrath; but when justice and punishment were to be meted out to the guilty, she never interfered. It was her constant endeavor to preserve peace among her subjects, and when reconciliation could be effected only by paying money, and the guilty party would not pay, she would always supply the neces-

sary means and thus restore good feeling among the contestants. When the king on account of some disputed rights quarreled with his brother Alfonso, the queen put an end to the quarrel by giving up to Alfonso some of her own possessions. At a later period her brother James, king of Arragon, contended with Ferdinand, king of Castile, in regard to some boundaries, the right to which both claimed, so that a war seemed to be inevitable. To avoid all this, Isabella persuaded the two kings to choose the king of Portugal as arbiter in the affair, and thus settle the matter amicably. A day was fixed for the decision to be made and a place appointed for the meeting; Ferdinand, king of Castile, Constantia his wife, Mary his mother, and many princes and nobles were present; then came James, king of Arragon, with his queen Blanca, accompanied by a magnificent retinue, and finally Dennis, King of Portugal, who was to act as arbiter, and his wife Isabella.

The whole affair was adjusted so peaceably that the three sovereigns concluded a treaty among themselves by which they were bound to assist each other in case of war. To this peaceful adjustment of the difficulty they were indebted after God to Isabella. Another occasion soon presented itself for Isabella to make fresh efforts in the cause of peace, but this time she was not so successful. Her own son, like another Absalom, formed the design of seizing the reins of government even during his father's life-time. The king determined to imprison him, but did not succeed in finding him. Isabella, together with her court-ladies, began pious devotions, and had Masses offered up that God would restore peace to her family, and she endeavored by her exertion and entreaties to induce the son to submit, and the father to forgive; but the courtiers who were interested in keeping up the quarrel, incited the king against Isabella, telling him that she was taking the part of her son, and the king, in consequence, banished her to the city of Alanquera. Many knights and gentlemen offered to make war against the king, but Isabella refused to permit them; she declared that she would suffer every injury, and even poverty, rather than be the cause of bloodshed to the kingdom, since by the most just war many innocent persons always lose their lives and property. The queen remained at Alanquera, and there led a holy life of retirement, fasting, and devotion. When the king heard of all that had happened, he recovered his senses, laid aside his suspicion, and recalled the queen from exile. The king had just then besieged the city of Coimbra which was occupied by Alfonso and his army. Here the queen at length succeeded in reconciling the father and the son, so that Dennis raised the siege, and retired from Coimbra, on account of which the son voluntarily submitted to, and asked pardon of his father; but Satan, and the youth's wicked associates soon again sowed the seed of discord between father and son, so that it finally resulted in a terrible battle between the adherents of both parties. Isabella, urged by love and grief, rode into the midst of the fight, and not heeding the missiles, went in search of the king and her son, and by her entreaties

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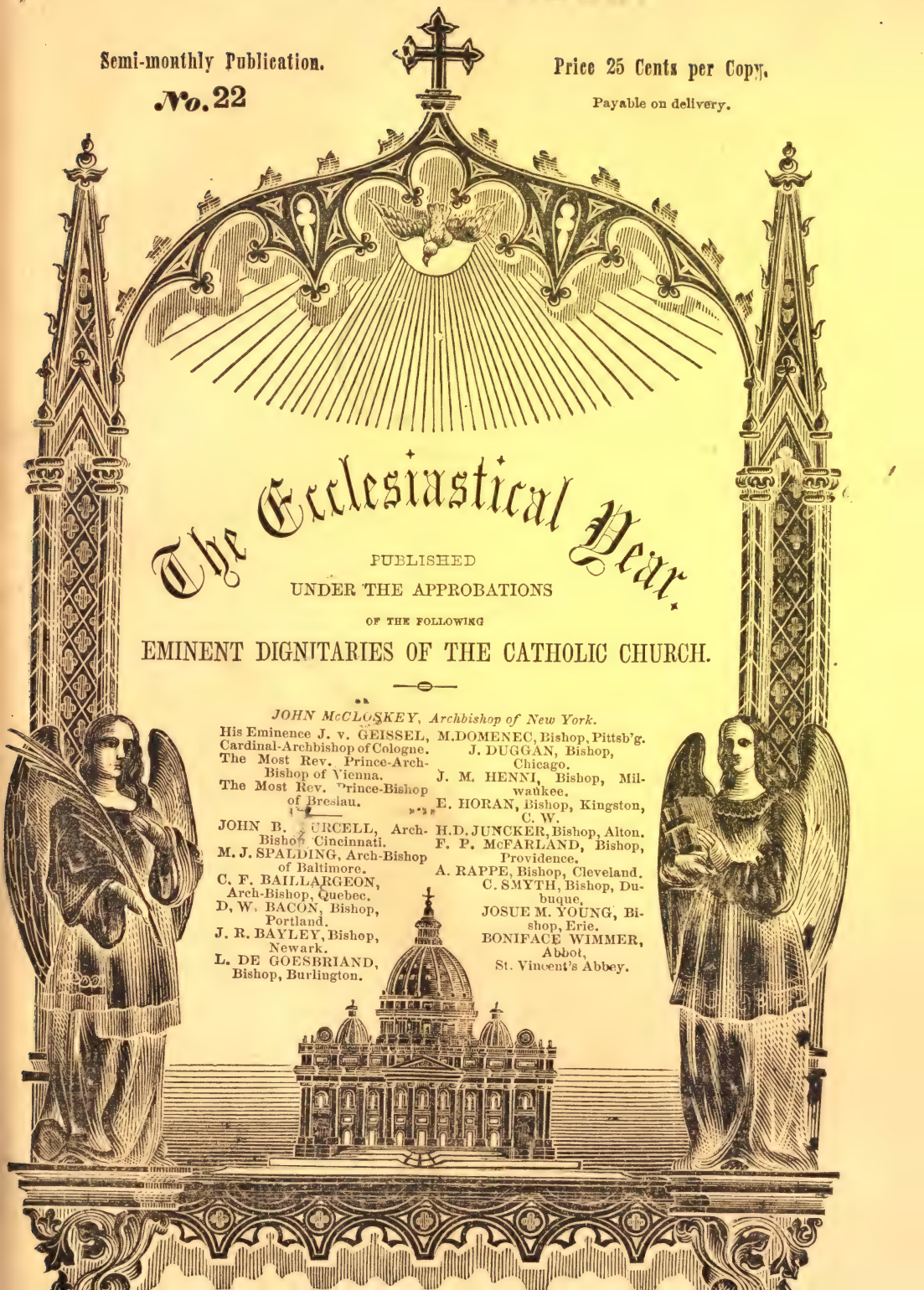
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caused them to put an end to the contest. The son again submitted to the king, his father, and kissed his hand, and the father gave his blessing to his son.

When the king was taken dangerously ill, Isabella could not be dissuaded from waiting upon him like a servant. After his death (1325), the queen gave up every mark of her royal dignity, and put on the humble habit of the third order of St. Francis. Out of her magnificent robes she had church-vestments made which she divided among the different churches, and from her gold and precious jewels she had chalices, crosses, and censers made. She erected a convent for the severe order of the Poor Clares, and intended herself to become an inmate of a convent; but upon asking the advice of learned and pious priests, they declared it more meritorious for her to exercise works of mercy with the riches God had given her; for if she should become a nun, the poor would lose their protectress. She then had a house built next to the convent, and joined in the devotions of the sisters. Even in her old age she had an opportunity to practice the beautiful virtue for which she had a special vocation. Through the calumny of wicked men so violent a hatred had broken out between her son, who was then king of Portugal, and the king of Castile, that a war became imminent. Meditating upon the evil consequences of such a war, Isabella determined to see both kings, and endeavor to reconcile them. Many of her friends sought to prevent her making this journey, for the reason that the weather was excessively hot, and she herself very feeble; but Isabella refused to listen to them, for she knew that she could not do a better work upon earth than to make peace, and prevent the evils of war. She reached the residence of her son, but in consequence of her exertion, and the fatigue of the journey, she fell sick, and died.

The birth of Isabella brought peace to the kingdom, for her father was thereby reconciled with her grandfather, with whom he had formerly lived in discord, and it was only right that she also should die when endeavoring TO MAKE PEACE.

ST. EPHREM.

(July 9.)

"Last Judgment"

THIS great Doctor of the Church led an extraordinarily holy life, and labored zealously for the kingdom of God upon earth. Although in his humility he had expressed a wish that no sermon should be preached at his funeral, St. Gregory of Nyssa deemed it to be only a proper mark of respect to the illustrious and saintly man, and he, therefore, delivered the eulogy himself. He commenced by saying: "The following words of the Gospel present themselves to my mind on this sad and solemn occasion: 'No candle is lighted that it should be placed under a bushel, but put upon a candlestick that it may give light to all that are in the house.' (Matt. 5 : 15.) God has made the life of St. Ephrem shine like a burning lamp, more brilliant than the sun at noon-day, and it is not His will that it should be placed under the bushel of silence, but upon the pinnacles of the Church. We must, therefore, obey the commandment of God in preference to that of the holy Father Ephrem." St. Jerome says, that the writings of St. Ephrem were so highly esteemed that in many churches they were read after the Scriptures. St. Theodoret calls him the "harp of the Holy Ghost, and the channel through which the inhabitants of Syria received the waters of grace."

Ephrem was the son of a peasant in Mesopotamia, and even in his early youth led a most Christian life, but his mind was sometimes assailed with doubts whether all things in the world happened in accordance to the will of God, or whether they were not the result of mere chance. Divine Providence, however, instructed him upon this subject. St. Ephrem himself relates the following incident of his life: "Going on a journey one day, I met a shepherd who asked me whither I was journeying, and I answered: 'Wherever chance leads me.' He invited me to stay with him, and as it was already night I accepted his invitation. Suddenly at midnight wolves entered the flock, and destroyed and scattered the sheep, but the shepherd knew nothing of it, as he had fallen into a deep slumber. When the owners of the flock came the next morning, and found them all gone, they held me as partly responsible, and consequently arrested me. Immediately after I entered the halls of justice, a man was brought in on a charge of adultery, the woman, however, had escaped. The judge postponed our examination, and ordered us back to prison. There we found another peasant accused of murder, but neither was the one an adulterer, nor the other a murderer, nor I a stealer of sheep. I had already spent seven days in prison, when on the eighth day a man appeared to me in a dream, and he said to me: 'Persevere with a heart that fears God, and you shall be convinced of the

Providence of God. Reflect upon your own thoughts and deeds, and question the other prisoners respecting theirs, and you will find that your punishment is well deserved.' When I awoke, and thought of the sins of my youth, I remembered having once by night chased a cow, belonging to a poor man, out of its pasture, and as the animal ran off into the woods, it was attacked and devoured by the wolves. I related my dream and my guilt to my fellow-prisoners, who listened attentively, and, seized with fear, they also commenced to confess their secret offences. The peasant declared that he had once seen a person drowning in the river, and, although it was in his power to assist him, he had not done so. The third prisoner had taken part in a false accusation against a widow, whose two brothers sought to deprive her of her patrimony by charging her with being a wicked and immoral woman, and he acknowledged that he was rightly punished for having sworn falsely against the innocent. Had I been alone, I should have ascribed my imprisonment to accident, but as it was we were all three guilty of crimes, that we had committed in former years. When we were brought before the judge, my two companions received many blows, and were sent back to prison; I alone was forced to remain. Two other prisoners were now brought in; they were the brothers who, by their perjury, had robbed their sister of her property. The one was accused of having murdered a man, and the other of being an adulterer. They were both put to the rack, in order to make them acknowledge their guilt, and they both made a full confession, the result of which was that it was proved beyond all doubt that the one had committed the murder, and the other the adultery of which my fellow-prisoners stood charged." Ephrem and the two innocent men were therefore set free, while the wicked brothers were condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts. "The night after my release," continues the Saint, "I again saw the man who had appeared to me when in prison, and he said to me: 'Return into thy country, and do penance for thy sins; rest assured that there is an eye that sees all.'"

From that time until his death, Ephrem had an extraordinary fear of the Last Judgment; the thought of it was always present to his mind, and it induced him to leave the world to lead an austere life in seclusion, fasting, watching, and holy poverty. Ephrem had formerly been a very passionate man, but he now became so meek and gentle that he was never heard to utter an angry word. Once, when passing through the street of a city, a bad woman made shameful proposals to him in order to excite him to wrath, but Ephrem mildly told her to come with him, and when they had reached the market-place, he said: "Now I will do as you wish." The woman, however, declared that she would not disgrace herself before so many persons, when Ephrem said to her: "If you are ashamed to sin in the presence of men, how much more should you be ashamed to sin in the presence of God who sees into the darkest abyss, and who will at the Last Judgment render to every one according to his works."

These words, by the grace of God, made such an impression upon the woman that, penetrated with true sorrow for her sins, she was induced by St. Ephrem to do penance, and afterwards entered a convent. The humility of St. Ephrem was very great, his only desire was to be regarded as a sinner, and it was a real cause of grief to him that the world honored him as a man of sanctity. He had been chosen Bishop of a certain city, and the inhabitants endeavored to compel him to accept the dignity: to escape their importunities, he went to a public square of the city, and ran about as if he were crazy, so that the people gave up their intention. He wept and sighed almost incessantly over his sins, and his heart was filled with grief when he heard of others falling into sin. After a time, Ephrem felt as if commanded by the Holy Spirit to labor in Edessa for the kingdom of God, and although he had never gone through a regular course of study, he was wonderfully enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and possessed in a high degree the gift of eloquence. While in Edessa his whole time was spent in praying, preaching, and in instructing the ignorant. He was once walking during the night with two of his disciples, and the brightness of the stars reminded him of the glory of the Saints who will appear with the Lord at the Last Judgment. This thought made a deep impression upon him, and filled his soul with such terror that his whole body began to tremble, and he burst into tears. The disciples asked why he wept, and he replied: "I am so much afraid, dear children, that on the terrible day of judgment I shall be placed on the left side, and that those who now praise my piety and virtue will then mock me when they see me burning in the eternal fires of hell, for I know how great has been my deficiency in every good work." The Last Judgment was the principal subject of his sermons and writings.

St. Gregory of Nyssa says: "We cannot read the sermons of St. Ephrem on the Last Judgment or Second Coming of Christ, without imagining that we are standing before the judgment seat of Christ, without trembling as if we were about to hear the dread sentence pronounced." Some of the written discourses of the Saint have been preserved, and translated from the Syriac; we will make a few extracts from some of them. Speaking of the Last Judgment, he says: "I tremble, seized with a great terror, when I even think of that hour, when I reflect upon the dreadful future which will then be revealed. Who can without fear meditate upon what will happen when the King of kings rises from His throne, and descends to the earth to call all its inhabitants, living or dead, to account for the deeds done in the body? When I consider that this will surely happen, then my limbs begin to tremble, and I grow faint with apprehension; my eyes fill with tears, my voice falters, my lips quiver, my tongue refuses to speak, and my mind is confused; for such great and awful things as will take place at the Last Judgment, have never happened since the beginning of the world, nor will ever happen. A terrific storm alarms us now, and we involuntarily shudder at the roar of thunder, but how will it be when we hear the

sound of the great trumpet of the Archangel awakening the dead, and summoning the living to appear, and be judged. The King of Heaven, who has power over all men, issues His command, and at once the earth gives up its dead, and the sea sends forth those who have so long slept beneath it. Death vomits out its victims, and leaves no one in the grave, but brings all before the judgment seat of Christ, whether torn to pieces by wild beasts, or swallowed by the fishes, or fallen a prey to the birds of the air, all, all shall rise at the summons, and not a hair shall be missing on their heads. How shall we stand it, my brethren, when we hear the words: 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; behold, the Judge is nigh; behold, the Lord appears to judge the living and the dead.' This cry moves the foundations of the world from one end to the other, the sea and the abysses. We shall then see the sign of the cross to which the Saviour was voluntarily nailed—it is the terrible and holy sceptre of the great King; every one will at that moment remember the words: 'Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.' Anguish and terror will seize upon every one, when suddenly the Angels will appear, the choir of Archangels, the Cherubim and Seraphim will gather together, and those creatures, full of eyes, will cry out with a loud voice: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come.' (Apoc. 4 : 8.) Now the heavens are opened, and the King of kings, our glorious and incomprehensible Lord, appears, clothed in majesty and power, and St. John says: 'Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him. And all the tribes of the earth shall bewail themselves because of him.' (Apoc. 1 : 7.) What eye can look upon Him? what soul will not be filled with terror? Then will be fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel, saying: 'I beheld till thrones were placed, and the ancient of days sat: his garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like clean wool; his throne like flames of fire; the wheels of it like a burning fire. A swift stream of fire issued forth from before him: thousands of thousands ministered to him: and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him: the judgment sat, and the books were opened.' (Dan. 7 : 9–11.) Then, dearly beloved, all men will stand between heaven and hell, between life and death, all filled with fear and expectation of the terrible hour of judgment; no one can assist another, and the Lord will divide men from one another, just as the shepherd divides the goats from the sheep, for the good will be separated from the bad. He will place on His right hand those who observe the commandments of God, the merciful, the friends of the poor and the orphans, the hospitable, those who clothe the naked, visit the prisons, assist the oppressed, attend the sick, those who now mourn, who are now poor for Christ's sake, who forgive their brethren, and who keep inviolate the treasure of faith; but He will place on His left those who have no fear, the proud of heart, the licentious, those who foolishly spend the time of penance, the indifferent, the drunkard, the envious, and the slothful. Woe to all who, on that terrible day, shall hear the words:

'Depart ye cursed into the eternal fire.' Alas! in that hour men will be separated from one another, each one going upon a way by which he shall never return. Whose heart is so hardened that he is not moved to tears when meditating upon the Last Judgment, upon that hour when Bishops and priests will be separated from their brethren in office, when kings and princes will be separated from each other, and, lamenting, be driven away like slaves. Then shall the rich and powerful of the earth look vainly around, seeking for comfort, but no one shall help them; then shall parents be separated from their children, friend from friend, wife from husband, and those shall be damned forever who, although virgins according to the body, were hard and unmerciful towards their neighbors, for an unmerciful judgment awaits those who show no mercy. Then shall be heard a voice coming from above and from below, saying: 'Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgment is right.' (Ps. 118 : 137.) And when driven into the place of their torments, deprived of all hope, without a helper or intercessor, the damned will cry out in bitter lamentation: 'O, how much time have we lost by our own carelessness! O, how we have deceived ourselves! O, how foolish it was for us to have mocked at the word of God when preached to us! What does the whole world profit us now? Where is the father who begot me? where the mother who gave me birth? where are our brothers? where our sisters? where are our children? where our friends? where are our riches, and our solicitude for them? and where are all worldly pleasures? Where are now the kings and the mighty ones of earth! Can it be that they are unable to assist us, for we cannot help ourselves! We are entirely forsaken by God and His Saints; there is no time now for us to do penance, no intercession can save us, and all our tears are useless. Poor wretches, we are without the hope of salvation, and we find no mercy, because we deserve none. Farewell, ye just, farewell, ye Apostles, Prophets, and Martyrs. Farewell, ye choirs of Patriarchs, farewell, ye holy monks, farewell, precious and life-giving cross. Farewell, O Kingdom of Heaven, farewell, paradise of joy, and thou, O Blessed Mother of God, farewell forever. Farewell, father and mother, sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, we shall never see you again, for in hell the worm never dies, and the fire is never extinguished.'

"O beloved, before that day comes, before God appears, and finds us unprepared, let us anticipate Him with confession, penance, prayer, fasting, tears, and works of charity towards strangers. Nourish your souls with the word of God, with psalms, and with singing hymns of praise, with the continued reading of the holy Scriptures, with hope, and with the contemplation of heavenly things. Let us leave the broad path leading to perdition, let us exert ourselves for a short time, so that we can enjoy eternal rest in the world to come. Happy is he who walks in the narrow path leading to everlasting happiness, but who yet remains humble, who is kind to the poor, and who never wearies in doing good. Let us urge one another to be virtuous, let us encourage and exhort one

another, and let us endeavor to attain perfection. Your conversation should be the judgment to come, and the advent of the Judge, your chief care. Think and speak often of it, and let no one say: 'I have sinned too grievously, I cannot obtain pardon;' remember that God is a God of the penitent, and has declared that there 'shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doeth penance.' (Luke 15 : 7.) To Him all the injustice of the world is like a fog which is dispersed by the breath of His mercy if we are only sincere in our conversion. Be careful, however, at the same time not to deny your sins, for whoever thinks himself to be without sin is blind, and deceives himself, and knows not that it is a device of Satan. No man is innocent. He alone is sinless who took away the sins of the world, who desires all men to be saved, who rejoices not at the death of the sinner, who is kind, charitable, merciful, and full of love towards souls; He who is Almighty, who is the Saviour of all men, the Father of the orphan, the God of the penitent, the physician both of body and soul, the hope of the hopeless, the help of the helpless, calling all to penance, and rejecting no one who is sincerely converted. To Him let us fly for refuge, for all sinners who have had recourse to Him have obtained eternal happiness."

The last year of the life of St. Ephrem was crowned by a great work of charity. A terrible famine visited Edessa and its vicinity; Ephrem had compassion and sympathy on the poor, but could do nothing for them, as he had given away all that he once possessed. He, therefore, used his extraordinary eloquence to persuade the rich to aid them, so that he unlocked their treasures as with a supernatural key. Many wealthy persons declared that they would give large sums of money to the poor if he would consent to distribute it, for they had no confidence in others. In such a manner he not only became a preacher of mercy, but he exercised it himself. Having spent a year in providing for the wants of the poor, and the famine being over, he returned to his cell, where he died at the end of a month. When the people of Edessa heard that he was dying, they came in crowds to see him, the dying Saint making even this an occasion to do good. A noble lady fell on her knees beside him, and begged to be allowed to purchase the coffin in which he was to be buried. Ephrem gave her permission to do so, but only on condition that the coffin should be very plain, that she would renounce the world, and in a spirit of holy poverty deprive herself of everything that was not absolutely necessary. He also conjured all who desired to glorify him after his death by magnificent funeral obsequies to give to the poor what would otherwise have been expended on him. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: for their works follow them." (Apoc. 14 : 13.)

ST. ULRIC.

(July 10.)

"To Bear Ill Will."

In wandering through parts of Germany we find many great buildings generally used as factories, in which large numbers of persons work as though confined in a penitentiary, receive but scanty wages, and almost starve in soul and body. This, however, is called industry, and is looked upon as a proof of the prosperity of the country. In former ages there were, instead of factories, as many monasteries, in which those who desired to give themselves entirely up to God lived together, and by prayer, labor, and preaching the Gospel of truth, served both God and man, thus working out their salvation. Monastic edifices of this kind were very numerous on the borders of the Black Forest, and on the twenty-sixth of April we referred to such a one, and to its founder, St. Trudpertus. Only six miles beyond this abbey we will find another, called, after its founder, St. Ulric.

Born of a noble family in Ratisbon, Ulric showed such extraordinary zeal and modesty from his very youth, that a pious old man once said of him that Providence would yet work great things through him. When Ulric had attained the age of manhood, Henry III. received him at his court, where he was so little attracted by the pleasures and splendor of the world that his conduct was like a silent sermon to the courtiers, and even the pious empress Agnes was edified by his behavior. The life of a court, however, was not adapted to such a holy soul as Ulric's, and after completing his studies, he became a priest in Trissingen where his uncle was Bishop. Soon after a terrible famine broke out, and Ulric pledged all he had in order to assist the poor with the money. When the famine was over, he desired to visit the Holy Land, and having gratified this wish of his heart, he resolved to leave the world, and to save his soul. In company with a priest, named Gerald, who was animated by the same desire, Ulric went to the celebrated Benedictine abbey of Cluny, of which St. Hugo was then Abbot. Both were at their own request admitted into the order, and Ulric was so content in renouncing the world that his biographer writes of him as follows: "He despised the world, longed only after the eternal goods of heaven, mortifying his flesh by severe works of penance. He was like a lamb in his meekness, and like a dove in simplicity and sincerity. His humility was so great that, like the publican, he would never raise his eyes to heaven, but kept them always fixed upon the earth. He governed his tongue, abstained from speaking idle words, and never conversed except on edifying subjects. Notwithstanding his severe fastings, and his continual watchings, he was often tormented with temptations against purity, but he extinguished the inward fire by an outward fire, lust with

pain, that is, he burnt himself with a hot iron. In the same manner did St. Benedict, the founder of the order, expel the same temptation by bodily mortifications, 'for the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence.' (Matt. 11 : 12.) St. Hugo soon discovered that Ulric was animated by more than ordinary piety, and he, therefore, charged him with different offices, but in consequence of his frequent vigils and labors during the night, he contracted violent headaches, and the remedies he employed caused him to lose an eye. He was, nevertheless, frequently sent on various and important undertakings, and was commissioned to cross the Rhine into Brisgau in Upper Rimsingen, where Hesso, a pious nobleman, lived, who, desiring to found a monastery, had already given large sums of money towards its erection. At his request some monks of Cluny were sent to him, who built the house and managed its affairs. St. Ulric was made Prior, but the place being too near the city of Rimsingen, was not secluded and quiet enough, he therefore selected a more retired place in the valley near the borders of the Black Forest, which is even now called St. Ulric's, and there, assisted by his brethren, he built a church and monastery dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul. The holiness of St. Ulric's life caused many wealthy men to leave the world, and labor for their salvation in this poor and severe order.

Conspicuous among the many virtues for which St. Ulric was distinguished, was his charity towards the poor, whom he called his intercessors and masters. While keeping the strictest fast himself, he gave abundant alms to the poor ; he sometimes gave his own clothes to them, and whatever kind friends presented to him, he at once distributed among the destitute. Several miracles are related whereby sick and indigent persons received help through the prayers of St. Ulric. He experienced a visitation in his later years that would be very difficult for an ordinary Christian to bear. He lost the sight of his other eye, but he suffered this too with fortitude and patience, and four years afterwards God led the soul of His holy servant from the dark prison of the body, to the light and eternal day of heavenly happiness.

One of the chief temptations to which we are exposed while living upon earth, is that of hating those who have persecuted us. St. Ulric, holy as he was, had to suffer from the enmity and opposition of others. There are many even among those who wish to be considered pious, who cannot allow others to pursue a life of Christian perfection with more earnestness than themselves. For this reason St. Ulric, even when living in the abbey of Cluny, had many enemies among the monks, who censured everything that he did. The Abbot when going on a journey, once took with him Ulric and another monk named Hunald. It was arranged that Ulric was to say Mass in a certain church, but as the Abbot was prevented from appearing at the appointed time, he sent Hunald to inform Ulric of his detention, and tell him to delay the Mass until he came. Hunald was very jealous of Ulric, and instead of delivering the message, he only made a sign to Ulric which the latter interpreted

as a permission to begin Mass, which he did, whereupon Hunald ran at once to the Abbot and told him that Ulric had refused to obey his command. The Abbot, although convinced of his innocence, determined to put Ulric's humility and patience to the test; he therefore went into the church, and seemingly very angry, told Ulric to leave the altar, and he himself disrobed him of his chasuble. With wonderful meekness and tranquillity, and without attempting to justify himself, Ulric did as he was commanded and even assisted the Abbot in removing the other vestments. Before building the monastery in which he remained until his death, Ulric was sent from Cluny to two other places to assist in the erection of monasteries. In company with another monk named Cuno, he was once thus employed at Rotgersberg, and as the people of that place had exhibited much zeal and rendered great assistance in the work, the two priests of the neighborhood became fearful that the revenues of their respective churches would be lessened. One of them called the monks poisonous weeds, desirous of planting themselves in that part of the country; he declared them to be full of hypocrisy, avarice and conceit, and he told the people to pray to God that they might be soon rid of them.

These expressions were related to Ulric and his companion, and it so happened that shortly after, one of the priests in crossing the mount of Rotger, was overtaken by night, and was unable to proceed on his journey, so that he was obliged to ask hospitably of Ulric. The Saint received him in the most friendly manner, led him first to prayers, according to the rule of the house, gave him the kiss of peace, and did all that he could to make him feel at home. This kind reception made such an impression on the parish priest, that he bitterly repented having used the insulting language in reference to the good monks. The next Sunday he publicly confessed his fault in the church, praised the Benedictines, became their warmest friend, and even assisted them himself in finishing the monastery.

When the building on mount Rotger was completed, Ulric returned to Cluny, and was soon after sent to the diocese of Lausanne to be Prior of the monastery of Paterniac. Burchard, the Bishop of Lausanne, led a most unedifying life, and Ulric considered it to be his duty to admonish him by friendly letters of the scandal he was giving, begging him at the same time to have regard for the high office he filled, and for the eternal salvation of his soul: but the Bishop paid no heed to his good advice. It happened that a priest who knew the Bishop well, came to the monastery, and Ulric, in the course of conversation, lamented in words of Christian charity, the terrible perversity of the Bishop.

The priest on his return home related all to the Bishop, but misinterpreted the language of St. Ulric in such a manner that the Bishop became enraged, and offered a reward to some soldiers if they would punish the bold monk. The mercenaries waited long for an opportunity to do so, and when Father Cuno was once returning to the convent, the soldiers mistaking him for Ulric, fell upon him,

and beat him in the most cruel manner. In order, therefore, not to give the Bishop another occasion for committing greater scandal, Ulric avoided the snares set for him, and went back to Cluny. The holy monk, however, had soon to suffer from the persecutions of new enemies. A certain man lived in Breisgau, who had been guilty of a heinous sin, but when the crime became known, and his disgrace public, he went to Gebhard, Bishop of Constance, asking to have some penance imposed on him, and begging to be reconciled to the Church. The Bishop sent him to Ulric that he might direct him how to lead a life of penance: but when Ulric consulted with his brethren, they were all of the opinion that their monastery was not the proper place for the man to stay since the crime had been committed in the immediate neighborhood. The penitent was, therefore, sent to the convent of Hirsaw, about 120 miles distant, and was there received. As the man was no more seen, and he had said nothing of his intended departure to his relatives, the report at once spread that the monks had buried him alive. The people became very much excited, and insulted St. Ulric and his brethren in every possible manner. It was just the time of harvest, when suddenly a thick fog arose, and the rain fell in such torrents that the peasants found it impossible to work in the field. Some of them then declared that the monks were the cause of all their troubles, for that the fog was greatest over the very spot where the unhappy man was buried, and they unanimously agreed to drive the monks from that part of the country. Surrounded by the angry people, like a flock of sheep by wolves, St. Ulric consoled his brethren with the words of the holy Scriptures: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3 : 12.) And he told them to pray fervently to the Lord to awake, and still the storm. And the Lord was awakened by the prayers of His servants, and did still the tempest that was raging about them, for, very unexpectedly, the man whom all believed to have been murdered, returned from Hirsaw, and convinced all by his presence of the perfect innocence of the monks. Such enmities are as advantageous to Christians, as the wind is to the trees and flowers, for if they were never moved by the wind, the sap would cease working through the delicate fibres, and the growth of the tree would be stopped; but by the motion of the wind the branches and the leaves are shaken, and the sap penetrates to the very innermost parts of the tree. In the same manner we may be good Christians, and lead good lives, but it may also be that we make no attempt to grow in virtue; if so, our spiritual strength will gradually become weak, our zeal lukewarm, the inward spirit of Christianity will cease to grow, and our lives will thus become withered and unproductive. For this reason Almighty God allows enmities to spring up, the angry feelings of the heart to be moved, temptations to assail us, against which, however, conscience warns us. If the Christian, therefore, desires to grow in holiness, let him combat against temptation, let him pray, deny himself, and strive with his whole strength for the possession of charity, patience, and meek-

ness, and if he acts thus, he will find that his soul has become fresher and stronger from having been visited by the storm of enmity. If you are attacked by an outward enemy, dear reader, think not so much of resisting him as of resisting the inward enemy of hatred and revenge, and if you persevere in your efforts, you will find that the true spirit of Christ will possess your heart; but if, on the contrary, you are carried away by the storm of passion, then is your religion like a hollow tree, prostrated by a hurricane, its rottenness and inward decay exposed before all.

ST. BENEDICT.

(July 11.)

"Looking into the Future."

On this day the Benedictine order has celebrated for more than a thousand years the memory of its founder, although his death took place on the twenty-first of March. The life of this world-renowned Saint has been written by another equally celebrated Saint, Pope Gregory the Great. Five centuries after Christ a certain young man went to study in Rome, but the wickedness of his fellow-students made him resolve to leave the world, for he preferred resigning the advantages of education rather than lose his purity. Far away from Rome he went in search of a wilderness, and was assisted in his purpose by a monk who showed him a cave in which St. Benedict had lived for three years, and where he was still living without the fact being known to any one except the monk who, from time to time, brought him something to eat. It was, however, the will of God that this brilliant light should no longer be hid, but should be placed on a candlestick, and the manner in which this was done was as follows. It was Easter, and a priest, while preparing his dinner, had a vision in which the Lord said to him: "You prepare excellent food for yourself while my servant is famishing in the desert." The priest took the meal he had prepared, searched for the place, and found the cave in which St. Benedict lived. They first prayed together, praised God, and conversed upon religious subjects, then the priest said: "Rise, brother, let us eat, for to-day is Easter, when it is not becoming in us to fast." They gave thanks, and proceeded to eat, after which the priest returned to his parish.

Soon afterwards some shepherds discovered the cave of St. Benedict, and when they first saw him in the woods, clothed in deer-skins, they imagined that they saw a wild beast, but they soon recognized in him the servant of God.

From that time Benedict received daily visits from the surrounding cities, and, owing to his admonitions, many were converted to a holy life.

St. Benedict was one day violently tempted with impure desires; the thought of a certain woman, whom he had once seen, took possession of his mind, and the wish to behold her again became so great, that he was on the point of leaving his solitude; but the grace of God dispersed the storm of temptation which assailed him.

Filled with shame for having yielded even for a moment to so base a desire, Benedict threw off his garments, and jumped into a hedge of thorns in which he rolled his naked body, until the blood streamed from every pore of his skin, and in this manner did he extinguish the inward temptation of lust, by outward pain, and from that time up to the hour of his death Benedict was never tormented with impure desires. As soon as the abode of St. Benedict became known, many persons left the world and confided to him the direction of their souls; and when the Abbot of a neighboring monastery died, the monks urged him to become their Superior. He did so, but as he refused to permit any innovation of the rules, the monks became so incensed against him that they determined to poison him. They mixed some poison in a glass of wine, which they placed before the Saint at dinner, and when Benedict as usual made the sign of the cross before raising it to his lips, the glass suddenly flew in pieces although it had not been touched, just as if instead of the sign of the cross, a stone had fallen upon it. Benedict then knew that it had been a drink of death, since it could not suffer the sign of life to be made over it; he therefore rose at once from the table, assembled the monks together, and quietly said to them: "Brethren, may Almighty God have mercy on you, but why have you acted thus? Have I not always told you that your manner of life and mine did not agree? Go now and seek a Superior who will permit you to continue in your excesses, for I shall leave your monastery at once." After saying these words, he left them, and returned to his former place of seclusion.

As the magnet attracts iron, so were pious men constantly attracted into the desert by the virtues of the Saint, and it was their united wish that he should assume the direction of their souls. He therefore in the course of time erected twelve monasteries in the vicinity of his cave but he did not remain long with the brethren.

The reason for his leaving was the following occurrence. A secular priest, named Florence, who was the pastor of a neighboring church, was tormented by envy and jealousy because of the great respect paid to St. Benedict. Not being able to induce the followers of the Saint to leave him, he devised a plan, satanic in its character. As a sign of friendship, he, according to the custom of the time, sent a loaf of bread to St. Benedict, but he had mixed a deadly poison in the flour. It so happened that the Saint had taught a raven to come into his cave at meal-time and be fed, but when told to eat a piece of the bread

which had been sent by Florence, the raven opened his bill, extended his wings, croaked, and ran around the bread, as much as to say: "I would like to obey you, but I cannot." Benedict knowing by inspiration that the loaf contained poison, commanded the raven to carry it to a place where no one could find it. The raven obeyed, and after an absence of three hours, returned to the cave and received its usual food from the hands of the Saint.

It grieved Benedict less that an attempt had been made upon his life, than that a priest should possess so wicked a heart. When Florence endeavored also to mislead the disciples of Benedict, the Saint resolved to leave his beloved seclusion, hoping that by avoiding his enemy, he would be left to enjoy peace and quiet with his followers. After having made the necessary arrangements in the different houses erected by him, he took some of the brethren with him, and started in search of a new home. Filled with malicious joy, Florence went upon the roof of a house to see him go away, when he suddenly fell from the top and was instantly killed. A monk ran after St. Benedict to inform him of the fact, thinking that he would rejoice at the news, and at once return, now that his enemy was dead. Benedict mourned over the sad fate of the wicked Florence, and imposed a severe penance on the monk for exhibiting so much joy at the event. Benedict felt convinced that it was the will of God for him to labor in a new place, and he therefore refused to return, but settled with his brethren on Monte Cassino. There was still an old temple of Apollo on the mountain, and many inhabitants of the neighborhood were accustomed to go thither in order to offer sacrifices to the idol. The servant of God destroyed the idol, and the altar upon which it stood, and changed the temple into a Catholic Church; he succeeded also in converting the people from paganism, and by his exhortations and instructions brought them to a knowledge of the true faith. Benedict and his companions built a monastery on the mountain, although the evil spirit used every means to prevent its completion; but by the prayers of the holy founder all difficulties were finally overcome. Benedict also received as a mark of his sanctity, the gift of miracles and prophecy.

Totila, king of the Huns, determined to test the latter, and he, therefore, sent word to the Saint that he intended to pay him a visit, but instead of going himself he sent to the Abbey one of his servants, named Riggo, dressed in the royal robes, and accompanied by a great retinue. As soon as Benedict met the pretended king, he said to him: "My son, lay aside those garments, for they do not belong to you." Filled with terror, Riggo and the other servants returned to the king, and told him what the Saint had said. Totila then proceeded to the convent, and threw himself at the feet of Benedict, and sought to excuse his conduct, but the Saint told him to rise, and then said to him: "You have done a great deal of evil, and you yet do much that is wicked; desist now from your evil ways. You will reach Rome, cross the sea, reign nine years, and in the tenth year you will die." The king was filled with consternation on

hearing these words, and he entreated the Saint to pray for him. From that time he ceased to be a cruel ruler, but the prediction of St. Benedict in regard to him was literally fulfilled. A pious friend paying a visit one day to the Saint, found him weeping bitterly, and when questioned as to the cause of his grief, Benedict said: "The whole abbey, and all that I have procured for my brethren will, according to a decree of Almighty God, fall a prey to the pagans, and I have found it difficult to obtain a promise from God that even those belonging to me shall be saved."

That very night the Longobards attacked the abbey, and destroyed everything that they could lay their hands on, the monks barely escaping with their lives. Benedict, when at supper one evening, was served by a monk, the son of a lawyer, and this monk, in a spirit of pride, thought to himself: "Who is he, and what am I that I should serve him?" Benedict, turning suddenly towards him, said: "Brother, make the sign of the cross—what thoughts have you in your mind? He then called the other monks together, told him who had been tempted, to sit down, and the monk himself related to the other brethren how his soul had been filled by the spirit of envy and pride. During a famine it happened that there was great scarcity of provisions in the abbey, so that one day the monks had nothing to eat. Benedict, seeing that his brethren were sad and discouraged, said to them: "Why are you sad? you have nothing to-day, but to-morrow you shall have an abundance." The next morning they found two hundred bushels of wheat before the gate of the monastery without ever being able to discover who had placed it there. One day, when conversing with his brethren, the Saint foretold the time of his death, and six days before he died, he had his grave dug. He was attacked by a violent fever, and when he felt that his hour had come, he caused his monks to carry him into the church where he received the last Sacraments, and, supported by some of his disciples, he died, standing erect, with his hands lifted up in prayer. Two monks who were absent saw at the same hour a dazzling light extending from the cell of St. Benedict up to heaven. The order founded by St. Benedict is one of the greatest in the world, and there was a time when there were thirty thousand Benedictine monasteries spread over the earth.

In the life of St. Benedict we have related facts in which his gift of prophecy was manifest. For the reason that a Saint is nearer to God than other men, he sometimes receives light from heaven, and things are revealed to him that are kept hidden from the ordinary Christian. All the Saints, however, have not possessed this gift, and those even who possessed it, did not know everything concerning the future. It is, therefore, a sinful thing for us to attempt to lift the veil which the wisdom and goodness of God has dropped over the future, and it is a grievous sin, if we in our desire to look into the future, seek out those who pretend to have the gift of fortune-telling. The table-moving of the spiritualists, which has in our own time become so general, and by which

people strive to unravel the secrets of the other world, is very sinful. Some are of the opinion that the whole affair is a deception, while others firmly believe it to be the effect of evil spirits. In either case it is sinful to have anything to do with it, because the sin consists in our doing what God expressly forbids us to do. According to the Old Testament it was a crime punishable with death to question spirits, and in the Catholic Church it is considered a mortal sin to attempt to know the future by going to fortune-tellers, or by questioning spirits. The Christians of Ephesus, therefore, burned all books treating upon magic, although they were valued at many thousand dollars. Endeavor, therefore, dear reader, to learn only such things as are for your own good; God reveals them to you through His Church, and they consist in your understanding the end for which you were created, and that is to possess heaven, and to dwell with Him in eternal happiness; but do not let yours be the hand to raise the veil, which it has pleased God to place between this and the other world.

ST. JOHN GUALBERTO.

(July 12.)

"The Crucifix."

THE Italians are generally very excitable, especially when they have been insulted: many become furious and others are filled with a desire to revenge themselves upon the offender by taking his life. We once read of an Italian, who placed his sword at the breast of his enemy whom he had thrown on the ground, and whom he threatened to kill, if he would not blaspheme. When the unhappy wretch cursed God, in order to save his life, the other pierced him with his sword; for he had commanded him to blaspheme, for the reason that he wished to destroy not only his body, but also his soul. In the same manner two knights once met in a narrow ravine near Florence: one of them, by the name of John Gualberto, had already sworn vengeance upon the assassin of his brother wherever he should meet him; but on account of the disordered state of the country, he had so far escaped unpunished. The father of Gualberto had even encouraged him to kill the murderer of his brother, so that when the knight saw the brother of his victim, he gave himself up as lost; for Gualberto was accompanied by many armed men, and he was alone, and escape was impossible. He therefore leaped from his horse, threw himself on the ground, extended his arms in the form of a cross, and awaited the death-blow. Gualberto saw what he did, and by the sign of the cross was reminded of Him, who on the cross, prayed for his enemies. Mercy knocked at the door of his heart,

which he opened and allowed to enter. Gualberto bade the murderer of his brother rise, for all would be forgiven him, and he could without danger continue his journey.

Gualberto, after having destroyed, not the life of his outward enemy, but that of his inward enemy, *the desire of revenge*, went to a church near the road, in order to pray. After fixing his eyes devoutly upon the crucifix, he saw the head of the Lord bowing to him, as if it desired to show its pleasure and to thank him, because, out of love to the crucified Saviour, he had been merciful to his enemy. (The same crucifix is still preserved at Florence.)

Gualberto was astonished at what he saw; heretofore he had led the life of a worldling, but now he considered in what way he could serve God with more fervor; he said to himself: If God has already rewarded the little I have done out of love to Him, with such a great and striking miracle, what will He give me in heaven, when I serve Him with my whole strength? He resolved to renounce the world, its pleasures, and its pomps, and to devote his life to the service of God alone. And from this determination, made before a crucifix, resulted a holy life, as will be related hereafter.

The sign of the cross caused Gualberto to forgive his enemy, although ready to put him to death, and at the same time God proved to him by the crucifix, that he had obtained pardon. In the crucifix is comprised as it were the whole Gospel in one single visible sign, and in looking upon it, many Christians have been prevented from executing evil deeds, encouraged to do good, consoled and comforted in sorrow. It is therefore very just and right, that we should not only find a crucifix upon every altar, but find one also in every Catholic house. The crucifix should be a silent sermon, by which we are reminded of our own guilt, of the holiness of God, of the love of the Father and the Son towards us; and it exhorts us to the love of God, to a sorrow for our sins, to hope, obedience, forgiveness, and patience. If you have no crucifix in your room, dear reader, endeavor to procure one, and if you have one, look upon it daily, but not only with the eyes of the body, but also with those of the spirit, that is, meditate for a short time on the sufferings of Christ, and make a firm resolution to follow Christ and ask Him for His blessing.

Gualberto then sent his attendants to the inn, but he himself went to a Benedictine monastery near by and relating to the Abbot all that had happened, declared his resolution to become a monk. The Abbot, however, expressed his doubt, whether Gualberto, accustomed to a life of luxury, could endure monastic poverty and discipline, and for this reason consented to receive him only as a guest. Meanwhile the father of Gualberto had heard of his intention; he came in haste, and amidst many reproaches, ordered the Abbot to let him see his son. Gualberto hearing this, cut off his hair, put on a habit, took a book in his hand and then waited for his father, who, when he saw his son attired as a monk, at first lamented, as if his child were dead, but afterwards became ap-

peased by the representations of Gualberto, so that he even gave him his blessing and then returned home.

Gualberto now remained in the abbey and led a very pious and holy life; he loved fasting and watching as much as the children of the world do eating and drinking. At the same time he practiced such an inward mortification, that nothing could make him impatient. When, after the death of the Abbot, an ambitious monk succeeded by unjust means in being elected, Gualberto, believing it to be dangerous for his salvation to remain, left in company with another brother, who was of the same mind, in order to live entirely in seclusion; for every monk is permitted to leave his order, if he wishes to enter upon a more severe course of life. Reaching a fertile valley, where dwelt two hermits, they informed them of their intention, and all came to the conclusion to found a monastery. They commenced with very little; their chapel was built of logs, and they had often only one loaf of bread to share among them all. Attracted by his sanctity others collected around him; the revenues of the monastery gradually increased, and Gualberto was elected Superior, although against his will. The spirit which animated him, he sought to impart to his brethren; he infused into their hearts a love for seclusion, contempt for temporal goods, penance, humility, and charity. If any of the brethren committed a fault, he was severely reprimanded by Gualberto, in order that no indifference or disorder might be introduced into the monastery by too great indulgence: but at the same time he was so full of love towards his brethren, that it could be justly said of him: Whoever feared him, loved him, and whoever loved him, feared him. His humility was so great that he would never consent to be ordained priest, as he thought himself unworthy of the dignity. Finding the number of those who desired to live a pious life constantly increasing, he erected several monasteries under the same rule, which was that of St. Bernard; but as in the time of St. John Gualberto (1050) many changes had taken place, he introduced greater strictness, for which reason the order of Vallumbrosa was considered as one peculiarly adapted for the salvation of souls; and, indeed, more than a hundred Saints belonged to the order of St. Gualberto, and there obtained perfection.

The fame of Gualberto's sanctity spread almost throughout the whole world: even Pope Leo IX. came to see the Abbot so renowned for his virtues, and Pope Stephen IX. also endeavored to see him. Many things have been related of the labors, sufferings, miracles, and prophecies, by which the life of this Saint was distinguished: we will now, however, speak only of his death.

When Gualberto became seriously ill, he himself announced the approaching hour of his death; he then assembled the Superiors of all the monasteries which he had erected to exhort them again, to bless them, and to bid them farewell. They then begged of him to leave for all the brethren some word of admonition; whereupon he dictated the following letter: "I desired to depart in silence—but

in view of the name, and the office I have held in this perishable world, although unworthily, I deem it useful to speak to you on the bond of love. Love is truly the virtue by which the Creator of all things was moved to become man, and which He recommended to His Apostles as the essence of all His commandments, saying: '*This is my commandment that you love one another.*' (John 15 : 12.) St. Peter says: 'Charity covereth a multitude of sins.' (1 Pet. 4 : 8.) If we, therefore, think that we possess all the virtues, but have no love, they will avail us nothing."

Three days before his death, Gualberto saw an Angel in his cell; after his death the monks left him three days unburied, in order to give an opportunity to all the Abbots of the other monasteries to attend his funeral. Although the weather was very hot, not the least offensive odor was observed coming from his body. His grave became soon renowned for the many miracles wrought at it. The crucifix which had bowed so miraculously towards him, was later transferred in procession, and with much solemnity, to the church of the Holy Trinity in Florence, and there exposed for veneration. There still exists a prayer-book, written by St. Gualberto, in which among others are to be found the two following prayers: "I give Thee thanks, O God of infinite mercy, who by the water of holy baptism and by the regeneration of the Holy Ghost hast freed me from original sin. I give Thee thanks, who has made me believe in Thee, and who by Thy grace has added me to the number of Thy faithful. Eternal, inexpressible, without end, and without beginning, whom we confess as the Tri-une, Thee alone I adore. I praise and bless, and give thanks to Thee, because Thou hast drawn me from the night of error and wickedness, and made me a partaker of Thy grace. Give me time to think, speak, and do what alone is pleasing to Thee; preserve me everywhere according to Thy goodness, and let me, unworthy and wretched as I am, one day enter Thy presence. Be with me, Lord God of Sabaoth, when I rise in the morning; attend me, and direct my works, my words, and my thoughts; watch my feet that they may not walk in idleness, but stand in prayer; watch my hands that they may be pure, unstained and uplifted without anger; watch my tongue that I may speak no idle words nor things belonging to the world, that I may not slander my neighbor, that I may not induce others to speak foolishly, that I may be always ready to praise, but slow to reproach. Watch my ears that they may not listen to calumny, falsehood, or idle talk, but may be open daily to hear the word of God. Watch my eyes that they may not look upon vanity. Give me, O Lord, Thy fear, contrition of heart, humility of spirit, purity of conscience, so that I may think of heaven, despise the earth, hate sin, and love justice in all eternity. Amen."

Prayer to the Holy Cross.—"Remain with Thy family, benign and merciful God, that in happiness and misfortune Thou mayest hear their petitions, and entirely destroy the snares of their adversaries by the assistance of the Holy Cross

upon which the Saviour of the world suffered, so that we may finally reach the port of salvation. I invoke the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so that the sign of the Holy Cross may always be over me, protecting me against evil deeds; and may the sign of the Cross be over me by day and by night. We adore Thy Holy Cross, O Lord, and we praise and glorify Thy resurrection; for, behold, through the Holy Cross joy has come over the whole world."

ST. EUGENIUS.

(July 13.)

"Sin against the Holy Ghost."

THE country now called Algiers, was in the fifth century a part of the Roman Empire, and the inhabitants not only attained a high degree of prosperity in the arts and sciences, but were also in general good Catholics. The Vandals, then under their terrible King Genseric, invaded Africa, and conquered the Roman provinces. The Vandals were Arians, and hated the Catholic Church, and, therefore, resolved to uproot it by force in Africa. The Catholics were deprived of their churches or beheld them destroyed, the Bishops exiled, and the faithful subjected to various persecutions and oppressions. The see of Carthage was on that account vacant for twenty-four years, but King Hunneric finally permitted the Catholics to elect a new bishop, and the most worthy man was elected for this office—St. Eugenius, whom even the heretics respected and venerated for his humility, charity, and piety.

The universal respect shown to St. Eugenius, roused the envy of the Arian bishops; they persuaded the king to forbid any Vandal from attending the church of Bishop Eugenius. The king ordered sentinels to be placed at the door of the church, and they would severely beat, as apostates from Arianism, every man, woman, and child who, by their dresses, were recognized as Vandals, and who attended the Catholic service. The king now became very malicious, and more disposed to persecute the faithful; he even desired to force the Catholics of Africa to adopt the Arian religion which he and his Vandals had embraced. God, however, in the beginning of the persecution strengthened the Catholics in their faith, and in their adherence to the holy Bishop Eugenius by a striking miracle. There lived in Carthage a blind man, named Felix, who was well known to the inhabitants of the city; he was admonished on the eve of Epiphany to rise, and go to Eugenius, the servant of God; he was told to have

his eyes touched by the Bishop after the blessing of the baptismal water, when his eye-sight would be restored to him. Felix imagined that he had been dreaming, and did not rise. Admonished again, the blind man still remained at home; but when summoned the third time, he awakened the boy who usually led him, and was at once conducted to the church. After having said his prayers, he sent word to the Bishop that he had something of importance to communicate. Eugenius allowed him to enter, for, on account of the great feast, sacred hymns were sung in the church even before the beginning of the day. Felix then related to the Bishop what had happened to him in the night, and begged Eugenius to restore his eye-sight. Eugenius replied: "Depart from me, brother, for I am only an unworthy sinner." The blind man, however, embraced the knees of the Bishop, and cried out continually: "Give me my eye-sight, as the Lord has commanded!" Eugenius seeing the perseverance of Felix, and as his time was pressing, went with him, accompanied by some clergymen, to the baptismal font, and blessed the water. After having said the usual prayers, he rose, and said to the blind man: "Brother Felix, I have told you that I am a sinful man; but may He who has visited you, give you according to your faith, and may your eyes be opened!" At the same time Eugenius made the sign of the cross upon the eyes of the blind man, and he immediately saw. He then went with the Bishop to the altar, and the miracle was made known to all the people present, and they broke out in great joy and jubilation in the church. The event was announced to King Hunneric, who summoned Felix to appear before him, and explain what had happened to him, and in what manner. When Felix related all according to the king's order, the Arian bishops said: "Eugenius did so by magic!" The Arians would most willingly have put to death the poor man who had had his eye-sight restored, just as the Jews desired to kill Lazarus after his resurrection, because Felix being well known to all the citizens, was a living testimony that God was pleased with the sanctity of Eugenius, and desired to establish the truth of the Catholic faith. The miracle was thus to the Catholics a confirmation of their faith, and served to strengthen them in the approaching persecution, but to the Arians it was a pretext for indulging in greater malice. Soon a most cruel persecution against the Catholics was commenced by the king at the instigation of the Arian bishops. The pagans scarcely practiced such cruelties against the faithful as these pretended Christians, the Arians, practiced upon the Catholics, and their hatred was especially shown to those Vandals who had become Catholics, for they did not hesitate to mutilate them by cutting off their noses, ears, and hands.

Bishop Eugenius was banished to a desert, and given over to the absolute will of an Arian bishop, who cruelly ill-treated the Saint, and endeavored to shorten his life. Eugenius had such a paternal heart for his faithful children that in spite of his own misery, he imposed heavy penances on himself, that God might the sooner have mercy on his beloved flock. He wore a penitential garment

made of rough hair, slept on the hard floor, and used a sack as a cover, which was often wet with his tears. In a pastoral, which still exists, he conjures his flock to remain faithful in the confession of the Catholic faith by meditating upon the awful day of judgment, and the terrible splendor of the coming of Christ; he tells them not to fear those who can only kill the body, but to awaken the mercy of God by prayer, fasting, and the giving of alms. The aged Saint at length fell dangerously ill, which fact was observed by the Arian bishop with great joy, and in order to hasten the death of the infirm bishop, he forced him to drink vinegar, pretending that it was a wholesome medicine, and, although the illness really increased for a time, the Lord finally gave health to His holy servant.

God punished the horrible cruelty which the Arian king and his adherents had practiced upon the Christians, with such a famine that the streets, the mountains, and even the market-places of the city were filled with the dead. Whole villages became depopulated. A countless number of men assembled in Carthage, the capital, to seek assistance; but instead of receiving bread they were driven away, and died wretchedly on the way. While Hunneric could not but see this terrible visitation of God against his people, he was himself attacked with a loathsome disease, and his living body was devoured by worms, and after his death his body fell to pieces before it could be buried.

Gutamundus, Hunneric's successor, permitted St. Eugenius to return from his exile, and the holy bishop induced the king, although an Arian, to have the Catholic churches again opened for divine service, after they had been closed for ten years. Two years later, however, Gustamundus died, and Trasimundus, his brother, who was hostile to the Catholics, succeeded. During his absence from Carthage the persecutions again commenced. St. Eugenius was arrested like a malefactor, and in obedience to the command of the king brought to the palace. Trasimundus prided himself upon his own sagacity, and upon the pretence of wishing himself to examine the truth, sent for Cyrila, the first of the Arian bishops, so that he and Eugenius might discuss the disputed dogmas in his presence. Eugenius, on that occasion, triumphantly refuted the Arian heresy, and an event happened whereby God Himself gave testimony of the Catholic truth. It was a well-known fact that several years before a blind man had recovered his sight by St. Eugenius making the sign of the cross upon his eyes; Cyrila now determined to prove the truth of his heresy by an apparent miracle. He, therefore, bribed an Arian with fifty pieces of gold, and persuaded him to feign blindness; it was agreed upon between them that, as soon as Cyrila would impose hands upon him, he would act as though he had recovered his eyesight. The Arian Bishop, therefore, had this man brought before the king and Eugenius, but the affair terminated in a manner different from what he had anticipated; for as soon as the Arian Bishop placed his hands upon the man, the impostor suddenly became really blind, and suffered such pain that he imagined his

eyes were falling out. Having thus become blind in body, the eyes of his spirit were opened, for he knew then that God is not to be mocked. (Gal. 6 : 7.) He confessed his fraud, and related how Cyrila had bribed him; he declared himself to be a Catholic, and implored Eugenius to baptize him. In the presence of the Arians who deny the Trinity, Eugenius made the sign of the cross upon the eyes of the man who had become blind, and said: "May thine eyes be opened in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in whom we believe as the one true God in three equal persons, and possessing equal power." At these words a miraculous effect was produced; the pain ceased, and at once the man could see. Neither King Trasimundus nor the impostor Cyrila, however, were induced to embrace the Catholic faith, but, on the contrary, became more stubborn in their unbelief.

When our Saviour once performed a miracle in order to prove to the Jews the truth of His doctrine, they could not deny the miracle, but they refused to receive the truth, and said, therefore, that the prince of devils had helped him. Then the Lord spoke the remarkable words, that every sin could be forgiven, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, which could not be forgiven in this or the other world. The hardened Arians sinned against the Holy Ghost, because they not only closed the eye of their spirit to the clear proofs adduced by St. Eugenius in behalf of the truth of the Catholic doctrine, but because they were regardless of the palpable miracle so evidently worked by the finger of God. The sin against the Holy Ghost, consists in not believing and in rejecting the revealed truths, although divine Providence has said and proved all that could convince us. Faith is the seed and the root from which Christian life comes forth, and reaches up to heaven, but faith is also a grace of the Holy Ghost. He, therefore, who in articles of faith voluntarily turns away from the proffered grace of the Holy Ghost and His light, closes his soul to the dazzling light of the Holy Ghost. Be careful, dear reader, to guard more against the sin of the Holy Ghost than against any other evil, and never dispute a religious assertion, if it is revealed truth or a Catholic dogma, because it is not agreeable to you.

Trasimundus persevered in his heresy. In order to terrify St. Eugenius he had him taken like a criminal to the place of execution; the executioner stood ready with his sword uplifted, when Eugenius was asked whether he was ready to die for the Catholic faith; he replied that he was ready, for that to die for justice' sake was to live for eternity.

At this answer the king changed his sentence, and exiled Eugenius to France, where the Saint took up his dwelling near the grave of St. Amarandus, martyr. One day he threw himself with outstretched arms upon the grave of the martyr to pray, and from that holy grave he never rose again, but died in peace, himself a martyr, although he died without shedding his blood.

BLESSED KINGA OR ZINGUA.

(July 14.)

"Matrimonial Purity."

LAST month we related the life of St. Ladislaus; more than two hundred years later was born blessed Kinga, who was a descendant of his family. Kinga, even when a child, exhibited extraordinary piety, and when she grew to be a woman, she excelled all others in virtue and intellect as well as in beauty. Boleslaus, at that time duke of Cracow and Pommerania, was a young man possessed of wealth, power, respect, beauty, spirit, and eloquence, but what is of infinitely more value than all, he was pious and virtuous. He asked the parents of blessed Kinga for her hand in marriage, and received their consent; but Kinga, wishing to serve God as a virgin, refused for a long time to accede to the wishes of her parents and relatives, but seeing that her tears and prayers were useless, and that her parents insisted upon being obeyed, she consented to marry in the hope of still preserving her virginity. She was then conducted to Cracow, where the marriage-feast was celebrated with the utmost pomp in the palace of the Duke. While the guests were feasting and dancing for several days, Kinga remained blind and deaf to all these pleasures, and continually implored the Lord to give her bridegroom also the spirit and love of continency, so that they might be able to lead a virgin life even in marriage.

When Kinga was left alone with Boleslaus, she told him that she had preserved her virginity with the greatest care, and that she did not expect to be robbed by him of this treasure, but to be protected; that she considered herself the spouse of Christ, and had vowed him perpetual virginity; that she had only obeyed her parents when she became his bride, and she now begged him to be a companion of her virginity and her brother in Christ.

Although Boleslaus had chosen her for his wife in order to have heirs, she, by her prayers and entreaties, made such an impression upon him that he promised to live one year in continency with her. He would make this concession because he had before their marriage promised to give her what she desired, and being asked for a spiritual instead of a temporal gift, as he expected, he would not break his word.

The first year, during which both lived together as brother and sister, was now drawing to a close, and Kinga earnestly entreated her husband to live the second year also in continency with her in honor of the Immaculate Virgin Mary. Boleslaus thought to himself that if he had last year made the promise for the sake of a temporal spouse, it would be unjust to refuse when asked in the name of the Mother of God. He, therefore, consented to the second year of continency. Kinga greatly rejoiced at his promise, thanked God incessantly

by tears, prayers, alms-giving, and fasting, and implored Almighty God during the whole year that she might until death be able to preserve her virginity. At the same time she invited other persons to pray for her intention. While Kinga endeavored by all possible means to avoid what sensual persons would have considered a pleasure, she only sought and did what sensual persons despise, she attended personally to those who were attacked by the loathsome disease of leprosy, when even the poorest servant refused to nurse them. Instead of spending her time in idle company and pastimes, as is usually done by people of rank, she went to the hospitals, and to the huts of the poor and the sick, nursing and assisting them like a mother, so that she often returned home completely exhausted while others enjoyed their rest.

Although Kinga on account of her position, and out of respect to her husband and mother-in-law, was obliged to dress very richly, she always wore next to her body a rough garment of hair; she fasted very often, taking only bread and water, and sent the costly viands of the princely table to the sick in the hospital.

When the second year was drawing to a close, Kinga threw herself at the feet of her husband, and implored him with tears to live in continency with her for the third year in honor of St. John the Baptist, for he would thereby prove himself to be a truly Catholic Prince, and a faithful servant of God. Boleslaus, irritated at this unexpected request, although he was by nature mild and kind, was filled with anger, and left her without saying a word. He did not even wish to remain in the same house with her, but left at once, going to a distant part of his dominions. After six months his anger subsided somewhat, and he determined to make another effort to overcome his wife's scruples. He sent word to his wife by various persons that if she refused to live with him as his wife, he would seek the company of other women, and that she would then have to answer for the sin of adultery. Kinga was not confounded by these threats, and she replied to those who had brought the message, saying: "I know the integrity of my husband, the duke, and am convinced that he is too noble wilfully to destroy his soul, body, and honor by committing adultery."

Boleslaus then went to the confessor of his wife, and begged him to induce his wife to yield to his wishes. The confessor spoke seriously to blessed Kinga, and said that she had taken the duke for her husband, that he had a perfect right to his claims and privileges, and she should not frustrate his hope and that of the country, to become the father of children; he also stated that many holy women had been the mothers of sons who had worked great things upon earth, and were now in heaven; that two members even of her own family, St. Hedwig and St. Elizabeth, had both been married, and were mothers of children, but were, nevertheless, canonized Saints; and he further told her, that since she had entered upon the state of matrimony, she should act accordingly. Kinga was very much confounded at hearing these words: on the one hand she dreaded

losing the carefully preserved lily of virginity, and on the other hand she was afraid of sinning against the sacrament of marriage by not keeping the promise solemnly given. This doubt, and the consideration of what she had best do, lay for some time over her mind like a heavy dense fog. She refuted, however, most ingeniously, all the reasons adduced by her confessor, and said that she could not be compared with the holy women Hedwig and Elizabeth; they had been strong in mind and character, but she was weak, and feared that if she would yield once only to the desire of her husband, her spirit would lose its dominion over her body. She stated also that it was quite uncertain whether she would have sons, and that she, therefore, did not wish for an uncertainty to give up the glory of her virginity. She, furthermore, stated that it was her confessor's duty to persuade her husband to keep inviolate her promise to God, and that it was not becoming in him to expect her to give it up.

Boleslaus, hearing that his attempt had failed, became more embittered against his wife, as the nobility and the people feared that if Boleslaus would die without heirs, different princes would claim the country, in consequence of which civil war and other evils would follow. Kinga, therefore, was besieged on all sides, for all who knew her sought to change her mind. In this her distress she had no other resource than constant and devout prayer. She had chosen St. John the Baptist as her patron, whose protection and assistance she continually implored. She fasted, taking only bread and water on the eve of his feast, spent the whole night in prayer, and invoked him to aid her in keeping her virginity inviolate.

She then had a vision; she saw the Saint standing before her, and speaking to her. He told her that her prayers were heard, and after three days she would, when leaving the church, meet Boleslaus; that he would be friendly to her, and declare his willingness to live in harmony with her, and to desist from his former demands. After three days it really happened as he had foretold, and it became evident, that the vision was no freak of the imagination. God who can overcome the hearts of men, had meanwhile changed the mind of blessed Kinga's husband, so that he even praised her on account of her perseverance, and declared his intention of imitating her. Kinga was filled with gratitude to God, and to her intercessor, St. John; she celebrated his feast by fulfilling the wish of all who came to see her on that day; she gave abundant alms to the poor, remitted the debts of her debtors, and procured the pardon of criminals from the duke. It is carefully related how Kinga attained a high degree of perfection in all religious exercises, and in works of charity and humility. She once told her husband that it would be better instead of leaving children, to leave something in the world which would be of advantage to them in the other world, that is, to found a convent for virgins who should pray for the salvation of its founders. Boleslaus consented, and thus they erected, and richly endowed a convent for one hundred virgins, according to the rule of St. Clare. Kinga in-

duced her husband to make a vow of chastity, and to bind himself not to marry again, in case she should die before him; but Boleslaus died first. Kinga, although urged to take the reins of government into her own hands, firmly resisted; with the exception of her ring, she gave all that she had to the poor, and with her sister Jolentha entered the convent of St. Clare, founded by herself.

Her biographer relates very minutely the holiness of her life in the convent; how extraordinary were her devotions, how great her patience in adversity, and even how many miracles were performed through her prayers.

She died in the year 1292, and her body after her death emitted a fragrant odor, while her face which, during life, had always been of an ashen hue, owing to her fasting, watching, and other severe penances, now became beautifully white, and her lips of a rosy color. The number of miracles performed through her intercession is so great that over one hundred cases, in which sick persons were cured, can be enumerated. "*Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.*" (Matt. 5 : 8.)

BLESSED BERNARD.

(July 15.)

"Our Native Land."

It was our good fortune in youth to spend eight years in the castle of Rastadt. We were permitted to walk through its vast suites of apartments which were adorned with many splendid paintings, one of which made a special impression upon our mind, and we can almost fancy that we see it now before us. It represents a young man of a strikingly noble form with his eyes fixed upon heaven in prayer, and we were told that it represented blessed Bernard, margrave of Baden.

Four centuries ago there reigned over the country of Baden a margrave, named Jacob, who was renowned far and near for his wisdom, solicitude for the welfare of his subjects, the advancement of religion, kindness towards the poor, and justice towards all, so that he was called the Solomon of Germany. He had five sons, the three youngest of whom became priests; the two others succeeded their father in the government of Baden.

The good parents gave a truly Christian education to their sons, and had them instructed by learned men in every branch of science. Bernard, when a child, gave evidences of possessing unusual talent; he found no delight in sports, but was absorbed in the contemplation of God, for whom he had the greatest

veneration and love. Christian doctrine and prayer were his pleasures, the sign of the holy cross the beginning and the end of all his actions. At the same time he was filled with respect, submission, and fidelity towards his parents and teachers, and was very friendly, peaceable, and kind towards every one. When a youth, he went twice a month to holy communion, and he was present every morning at the holy sacrifice of the Mass. When at his devotions, he would remain upon his knees in such a respectful and modest attitude, and was so recollected in his demeanor that his very appearance was for the people in the church a silent prayer, and an exhortation to fear God. With his years his piety also increased; he gradually accustomed his soul to commune with God, so that even when transacting important affairs, when conversing or walking with any one, his mind was always occupied in spiritual meditation. Persons would often remark an unusual beauty in his countenance when he returned from his devotions. He often said himself, that if we wish to warm ourselves, we must go near the fire; in the same manner must we approach God in prayer, if we wish to partake of His heavenly sweetness.

As in praying, so also in fasting Bernard showed an extraordinary zeal; when a boy he not only observed the days of abstinence appointed by the Church for those who are of age, but he also fasted every Friday so strictly that he ate little or nothing. By so doing he wished to honor the Passion and death of Christ. He sometimes said to his friends: "As the horse is restrained by the bridle in order that he may not run away, in the same manner should we curb our body, so that the soul may not fall with it into ruin." He called fasting and prayer the two rocks which the enemy (Satan) might attack, but not take.

The young margrave, although living for some time at the court of the Emperor Frederic IV., led as pious a life as though he lived in a monastery. He was very prudent in all his actions, and avoided every occasion which could have been in the least dangerous to his chastity. The most frivolous persons, when in the society of this pious prince, were very careful not to use ambiguous or indecent language. While blessed Bernard was severe with himself, he was very kind towards his fellow-beings, especially to the poor and naked. Bernard, however considered his manner of life as not sufficiently holy for him to appear without dread before the eternal Judge; he, therefore, never went to sleep without having examined his conscience, and confessed the sins of which he found himself guilty. He often said that no Christian should ever go to sleep, unless his soul was in a state of grace, since many have died in their sleep. After the death of his father, Bernard inherited a part of the duchy, the revenues of which he used to increase his charities. He divided his income into three parts: the first he gave to the poor, the second to build and decorate the houses of God, and the third he used for his own wants, and for those of his people. In a truly Christian life, however, there is no standing still. Although blessed Bernard had attained a high degree of perfection, he still desired to

advance in virtue by leaving the world in order to imitate the life of poverty practiced by our Saviour. Bernard's father had already made preparations to betroth him to the daughter of Charles VII., king of France; he, however, renounced what the world deemed a great happiness, gave up his portion of the duchy to his brother Charles, and resolved to retire to a wilderness where, separated from the world, he could serve God alone. Divine providence, however, willed it otherwise. At that time, the Sultan Mahomed II. had conquered Constantinople, and subjugated the whole empire of Greece; the danger was already imminent that he would invade Germany, and subjugate other Christian countries. The Emperor Henry, therefore, summoned all the Christian princes to unite, and oppose the common enemy of Christendom, calling upon them to make a crusade against the Turk. The emperor knew no prince better fitted or more zealous to conduct the affair for the interests of Christianity than the holy Bernard. He therefore begged him to visit the princes separately, and to incite them to join in a general crusade against the Turks. Bernard accepted his commission, for he desired to render some services to religion. He had first of all to open negotiation with the Pope, and in order to make sure of success at Rome he went to France, and prevailed upon the king to promise his co-operation; he then went to the duke of Savoy, who also promised to aid him. He next proceeded to Rome, and having arrived on his way thither at Moncalieri, he fell dangerously ill. Seeing his end approaching, and being a member of the third order of St. Francis, Bernard desired to be taken to a Franciscan convent, there to prepare himself for death. After having received the holy sacraments with great devotion, he put on a penitential robe, took a crucifix in his hand, and waited for the hand of death to open to him the gate of heaven. Bernard had taken with him his confessor, the Franciscan Father John Argot, who, after the body of the young prince had been carried into the cathedral, and deposited before the High Altar, delivered a funeral sermon. A lame leper who was not allowed to enter the church on account of his disease, heard the eulogy of the deceased from the outside; he was filled with confidence, invoked Bernard's intercession, and was at once made whole. Many other miracles were performed on his grave, and crowds of sick were healed. For this reason the inhabitants of Moncalieri have chosen blessed Bernard as their protector, and celebrate the anniversary of his death on July 15. They have built chapels and altars in his honor, and have a special devotion and veneration for him; the same is done in many places of Piedmont where his likeness is often found.

Blessed Bernard is also venerated in Metz; in the city of Vic some portions of his body are shown, with his sword, and a silk cloth in which his body was wrapped. In Lorraine his memory is held in benediction, but in Baden, his native country, little is known of him except by the priests, and in the convent of Lichtenthal. The estates which once belonged to blessed Bernard—Pforzheim and its environs—are now in the hands of Protestants who do not wish to know anything

of the Saint. The beautiful painting of blessed Bernard which we saw at the castle of Rastadt, was not considered worthy to hang in the spacious saloons, but it was placed in the corridor, while in the saloons were to be seen the portraits of gaily attired court-ladies.

This and many other things must awaken sad feelings among the Catholics in Baden—but it directs their thoughts to a greater and more glorious country. If the native country of the blessed margrave has forgotten him, and has almost given up the true faith by which he was led to sanctity and eternal happiness, he is still venerated in France and Italy; for the Catholic is at home among Catholics—his spiritual home extends over the whole world, even into heaven, where the Saints dwell in eternal honor. The Catholic Church is the great fatherland of all faithful souls—it is the powerful kingdom which alone shall survive all the other kingdoms of the earth.

FEAST OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY OF MOUNT CARMEL

(July 16.)

"The Scapular."

Nazareth lies in a valley surrounded by hills. Ascending a hill, and looking towards the West, we observe a sea and a high mountain, called Carmel, extending like a great wall towards the sea. Upon the last hill where the mountainous wall descends suddenly towards the water, stands the beautiful convent of the Carmelites. A noble and magnificent church of marble is erected there in honor of her who more than eighteen hundred years ago lived in Nazareth as an humble virgin. About a thousand years before that period, the great Prophet Elias taught upon that mountain, and gathered disciples around him; and even now there is shown a cave at the foot of the mountain, called the School of the Prophets, because Elias is said to have taught his disciples there, and the Carmelites regard the Prophet as their founder.

The Carmelite order spread from mount Carmel, in Asia, to other parts of the world, and was distinguished by the special devotion of its members to the Blessed Virgin. At the time when the Carmelites came to England, a wonderful man lived there, named Simon, who belonged to a noble family. When but twelve years old, he was so filled with the spirit of piety that he left his father's house, and went to live in solitude in order to live for God alone, and to meditate upon the glorious Mother of God. He took up his abode in a hollow oak

in which he could hardly stand upright, from which fact he received the name of Stock; notwithstanding the narrow space, the tree served as a bed, cell, and chapel. Prayer was his only occupation, and he attained in this penitential life such a high degree of perfection, that he conversed with heavenly spirits, and even had apparitions of the Blessed Virgin, who revealed to him that the brethren of Mount Carmel had arrived in England, and that he should join them. Simon Stock at once left his tree, and the wilderness where he had lived for more than thirty years, searched for the Carmelites, asked to be received into their order, and found such holy companions among them that their conversation was like that of Angels.

Simon, after having been received, felt a great desire to visit the Holy Land, permission to do which was granted him by his superiors. He visited barefooted the holy places, which our Saviour had sanctified with His divine presence, and then he retired to Mount Carmel, where he for six years led a most supernatural life, and conversed only with heavenly spirits. It was said that, while there, the Blessed Virgin herself had provided for his wants in a wonderful manner. When he returned to England, he endeavored to kindle in the breasts of every one the same divine fire that glowed within his own, and this he did with such success that the people as well as the members of the order became filled with the most fervent love and veneration towards the Mother of God. Simon, who had now been unanimously chosen General of the entire Carmelite order, fervently begged of the Blessed Virgin to give him a token of her love for the Carmelites, and a sign of her continual protection. After he had spent several years in prayer, tears, and penance, the Mother of mercy heard the petition of her servant. While in London during the year 1251, Simon had a vision of the Blessed Virgin, clothed in great splendor, and surrounded by troops of Angels. She said to him: "Dear son, take this scapular as a token of my friendship, and as a prerogative of the Carmelites; whoever dies in the order shall never be lost; behold, it is a sign of salvation, a covenant of peace, and a compact forever."

Such revelations are only safe when they are examined and approved by the Catholic Church, which is the pillar and ground of truth. Several Popes not only approved, but even recommended the faithful to wear the scapular as a sign of special veneration for the Blessed Virgin, and indulgences were granted to all those who fulfilled the prescribed regulations. Princes and people commenced to wear the scapular, and many miraculous escapes from fire, shipwreck, and other dangers are related whereby Almighty God has shown that He is pleased with those who wear the scapular out of veneration for the Blessed Virgin.

Some persons may, perhaps, be scandalized by the words that the wearing of the scapular can save any one from eternal damnation, and may say: "We can do whatever we please, for as we wear the scapular we shall not be damned." The words regarding the scapular, are to be interpreted in the same manner as

those words of the holy Scriptures in which it is said: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved" (Mark 16 : 16); or, "Blessed are they that mourn" (Matt. 5 : 5); or, "Alms deliver from death." (Tobias 4 : 11.) All these scriptural texts are, therefore, only valid when a man does everything to be saved, that is, avoids mortal sin, endeavors to fulfill his duty, and forgives his enemies from his whole heart. In the same manner, he who wears the scapular, can only expect to be preserved through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin from the fire of hell, if he earnestly endeavors to lead a Christian life by zealously fulfilling the duties of his holy religion. While, therefore, the scapular can in no case save from eternal ruin those who die in mortal sin, there are on the other hand many cases related where sinners, wearing the scapular, were in a striking manner saved from a sudden death, and converted from their sins.

Besides enjoying the special intercession of the Blessed Virgin, he who wears the scapular in her honor belongs to the Carmelite order, and, therefore, participates in all the good works and merits which the Carmelites obtain through an austere life, fasting, silence, weeping, scourging, praying, receiving the holy Sacraments, celebrating Masses, and the practice of all virtues. Pope Paul V. granted several indulgences to those who joined the confraternity of the scapular, and a special plenary indulgence to every member who, after a sincere confession and worthy communion, at the hour of death pronounces the name of Jesus in the heart or with the lips. The conditions of this confraternity consist in wearing the scapular, in observing chastity according to our state of life, to say the little office of the Blessed Virgin, and for those who cannot read, to abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The scapular itself is a piece of dark-brown cloth attached to a double string, so that it may hang over the shoulders, one piece on the breast, the other on the back. It must be well understood that in itself it possesses no proper virtue, and should not be considered as an amulet, but it is only a sign and confession that we desire to venerate faithfully the Blessed Virgin.

Some one may say: "Why shall I wear the scapular, and observe the statutes of the confraternity, if it does not profit me any without a Christian life? If I, however, lead a good and pious life, I can obtain heaven without a scapular." In answer to this we will use the words of St. Peter: "And if the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. 4 : 18.) It is not a small matter to be saved, and during our lives we are in great danger of losing our souls; the watchful Christian, therefore, uses every means by which he is assisted in obtaining salvation; it is, therefore, very important to secure the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and this is done by entering the confraternity of the scapular. Are you, dear reader, in a state of sin, you will easier obtain the grace of conversion; are you in the state of grace, you will the easier persevere unto the end, and you can obtain greater merits, and be sooner freed from purgatory. Out of gratitude for such a grace

given by the Blessed Virgin to the Carmelite order, a special feast is celebrated to-day, under the title of *The Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel*, and the Church prescribes the following prayer: "Holy Mary, succor the miserable, help the weak-hearted, console those who weep, pray for the people, mediate for the clergy, intercede for the devout female sex, that all may feel your assistance who celebrate your holy commemoration. O Lord, who hast adorned the Carmelite order with the title of Thy Mother, the most blessed Virgin Mary, grant propitiously that protected by the intercession of her, whose commemoration we solemnly celebrate to-day, we may be made worthy of obtaining eternal glory, who livest and reignest with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen."

ST. ALEXIS.

(July 17.)

"Perfection."

THE biography of this Saint we take from a very old work, printed at Strasburg in the year 1510:

"The father of Alexis was Euphemian, a wealthy Senator of Rome; he belonged to a noble family, and loved God; he was very pious, serving God day and night in prayer, fasting, and works of charity; he was merciful, fed daily many poor persons, consoled the pilgrim with alms, and invited priests every day to dine with him. Theodosius was then emperor, and by his advice Euphemian took in marriage Aglae, the daughter of Prince John. Aglae loved God, and served Him always, and when she met her husband they loved one another. They possessed great honor and riches, and were served by about one thousand knights who were splendidly attired in silk and gold. The pious couple, however, had no heir to their vast wealth, and they asked God day and night to give them a child. God heard their prayer, for after many years they had a son whom they named Alexis.

"They were full of joy, and thanked God; the Pope himself baptized the child, who, as it advanced in age, advanced also in learning and piety. When twelve years old, Alexis was sent to the court of the emperor, where he soon became remarked by all for his piety, humility, and charity. At the age of twenty, in obedience to his father's wishes, he married a beautiful and noble virgin, named Sabina, who was also related to the imperial family, and their friends greatly rejoiced at the marriage.

"When evening came, however, Alexis confided to his virgin spouse that he had made a vow of perpetual chastity. He then gave her a ring of gold, and said to her: 'See the candles before us are nearly burnt in their sockets; so it is with earthly pleasures; although we are young, wealthy, and powerful, we must soon die, for all things are perishable: let us, therefore, endeavor to obtain heavenly joys, which God gives to those who love Him; let us praise God and take care of our souls, and live in purity and chastity.' Sabina, in reply, said: 'God be with you at all times, I will do as you say.'

"Alexis then parted from his bride, and recommended himself to God and His Blessed Mother. He took off his rich garments, and put on the humble garb of a pilgrim, went to Edessa, and there begged for alms, but not for himself alone, but for other poor persons also.

"When his parents entered the bridal apartment they found his wife alone, and in tears; they were very much astonished, and asked her what had become of Alexis. She told them what had happened, showed them his beautiful robes which he had laid aside, and the present he had given her. Upon hearing this they became very sad, sent messengers throughout the country to seek for him, and although they came to the city where Alexis was, they knew him not; for, on account of his mortified life, he had become so thin that no one could possibly recognize him. But Alexis knew his father's servants, and asked alms of them which they cheerfully gave him, and he rejoiced to have received alms from his father's servants. The messengers, however, returned, and said that they could not find him, and the mother replied that she could not be happy until her son was found. Sabina said: 'I will do as the turtle-dove who, when it loses its mate, lives alone, and never choses another companion.'

"Alexis remained seventeen years in Edessa, received holy communion every Sunday, and zealously served God day and night by fasting, praying, and good works. One Sunday a terrible storm arose when the people were all in the church; the sexton wishing to lock the church, ordered St. Alexis together with other poor people out, but the Blessed Virgin stood at the door, and told the sexton to let her servant remain within. The sexton looked around, unable to understand what was meant by the words, and the vision said: 'You will soon know him, for he wears a mantle, and a penitential shirt of hair; he has a beard, and is neither young nor old: he is very pious, and is sure of heaven; the Holy Ghost dwells in him, and his name is Alexis.' The sexton then went to Alexis, and spoke to him, when at once all the bells of the city commenced to ring of themselves, owing to which a great crowd gathered near the church, and asked why the bells had rung. The sexton replied that a holy man was among them, on whose account God had performed this great miracle; he told them that the Blessed Virgin had spoken with him, and pointed out to Alexis, whom the assembled multitude commenced at once to honor. Alexis, however, feared to lose the merits of his labors, and fled from their proffered honors and

dignities. Alexis left the city, and embarked in a ship for Tarsus, when a great storm arose, and carried the vessel to Rome, where his father lived in great magnificence; the Saint, however, sighed, and said: 'O Lord, help me that I may remain unknown to my father, and then grant me the grace of receiving alms from him.' Alexis then went to his father, and asked him for the sake of his son Alexis, whom he had lost, to allow him a corner in his house where he could live, and serve God. Euphemian complied with his request, and gave him in charge to the servants, telling them to treat him kindly. Beneath the marble steps was a small cell, belonging to one of the servants, in which St. Alexis took up his abode; he had his daily portion given to him, and was pleasing to God by vigils, prayers, and fasts; but he had to suffer from the mockeries of the servants who threw dirt upon his head, and would sometimes even beat him; Alexis, however, thanked God in the night for all the sufferings he had endured during the day. He saw and conversed daily with his parents and wife, who asked him if he ever had known Alexis, and he replied that he knew him, and had often received alms with him; that like himself, he was a pilgrim, and had to suffer much. His wife then asked his name, but he said that he had given up his name for the sake of God. She then said to him: 'Tell me, dear pilgrim, how did Alexis look, and how tall was he?' And he said: 'He was as tall as I am.' She then asked him if he had never spoken of his wife, and he replied: 'Yes, he told me that in parting he had given her a golden ring; he also related to me how he parted from her, for he told me all his sorrows and his joys; but his greatest sadness was that his parents and wife had been so afflicted on his account. He had, however, given all up for the sake of God.' Her next question was: 'Did he not wish to return, or was he ever sorry for having left me?' And Alexis answered: 'I never heard him say so; his wish was to lead a poor and obscure life.' She then said: 'O my Lord Jesus, I recommend him to Thee—be always with him.'

"Such conversations often took place between them, and Alexis remained firm and pious, and whenever he saw his parents passing by his cell in their gorgeous attire, he never felt the least desire to be clothed like them. Thus he lived for twenty years under the stair-case, and suffered all with patience for the honor of God.

"The time, however, had arrived when he was to receive his eternal reward; he therefore called one of the servants, asked him for a pen and ink, and then wrote a letter in which he described all that he had suffered after leaving his parents and his wife; he also spoke of his misery while living under the stair-case, and told his parents to give his inheritance to God. After having closed his letter, he gave up his spirit into the hands of Almighty God. This happened on a Sunday, and all the bells of the city rung, so that the people wondered, and asked the cause of it; and a loud voice said three times, so that all would understand: 'Go, and seek in the house of Euphemian for the friend of God, who

will intercede for Rome, and you will obtain whatever you ask through him, who has just now died. All the people rose, and Euphemian also, who went first to his house where, under the stair-case, lay the poor beggar dead, and a sweet odor came from his body. St. Alexis had the letter in his hand, and his face was as bright as the sun; the letter was then read, so that all the people could hear it. Euphemian, when he knew that it was his own son, was struck with fear, so that he fell prostrate from grief, and with bitter tears lamented his death; he then threw himself upon the body, and cried: 'My son, why have you not consoled your father and your mother? I always hoped to find you alive, but, alas! I see you dead before me. O, that I had died before you; for the son whom God gave me as a consolation, is now the cause of my grief.' The mother then came lamenting and weeping, so that those who were present were moved to tears, and, throwing herself upon his body, she said: 'My only child, why did you leave us; instead of filling our hearts with joy, you have filled them with sorrow; weep ye all, therefore, with me, and lament with me, because I did not recognize my son, who has lived with me for twenty-two years.' The wife of Alexis also came, and said: 'I will remain a widow for life, since I have lost you, my husband.' The lamentations were so general on account of the death of St. Alexis that the Pope commanded his body to be carried into the church, for he also shared in the common grief of all. The crowd was so great that Alexis could hardly be carried into the church of St. Boniface. And the Lord in His grace gave proofs of the sanctity of His servant, for all the sick who touched the body of the deceased recovered. The body was now placed in a shrine of gold and precious stones, and although it remained for seven days, being kept for the consolation of the sick and the afflicted; it emitted a sweet odor, and all praised God and St. Alexis. His father Euphemian built a beautiful church in honor of his son St. Alexis, whose body is interred in the church.

"Sabina, after the death of her husband, served God most fervently by praying, fasting, watching, and other good works, and although rich and noble, worked with her own hands for her daily bread during thirty-four years, and until her death. She desired to be buried by the side of her husband, and when the grave of St. Alexis was opened, many wonderful signs happened. A sweet odor proceeded from her also, and a brilliant light appeared like that of the sun; a great crowd assembled around her, and the Angels were heard to sing; they also saw that St. Alexis had moved from his place in the grave in order to make room for his wife. All those who witnessed this miracle praised God in hymns and prayer. May St. Alexis and his holy wife Sabina intercede now for us that we may obtain eternal life. Amen." Thus far says the biographer.

St. Alexis for many years had within his reach all that is pleasing to the heart of man; he saw wealth, honor, and luxury before him; he saw his beautiful wife daily, but he himself, the only son, the husband and heir of all the wealth, lived like a dog under the marble steps, laughed at by the servants of

the house, and to all appearances a beggar. He often heard them speak of Alexis with great love and affection. If he had only spoken the words: "I am Alexis," he would have regained love, joy, honor, and all that the world calls happiness. Why did he not do so, for it would have been no sin if he had made known his identity. It was because he knew that a higher perfection could be obtained, and greater beauty and loveliness before God, if he voluntarily renounced temporal wealth and pleasures which he could possess without sin. You, dear reader, perhaps do not wish to renounce that which is sinful or of doubtful character. Remember the words of the Lord are also applicable to you: "Be you, therefore, perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5 : 48.) Every day should be a step nearer to perfection, as it is a step nearer to the grave. Commence by avoiding conscientiously every deliberate sin, possess and use nothing, unless you are satisfied that it is lawful for you to do so, and renounce some things which you are not obliged to do, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

ST. CAMILLUS.

(July 18.)

"Passion for Gambling."

THE wife of a soldier in the kingdom of Naples became the mother of a son, whose early training was neglected by his father, and although sent to school, the boy preferred cards and dice to his books, in consequence of which he scarcely learned how to read and write. When eighteen years old he became a soldier, and was with his father obliged to join the army in a campaign against the Turks. Just as the regiment was about to embark at Ancona, both fell dangerously ill, and had to remain; as soon, however, as they recovered, they desired to return home; but on their way back the father again became very sick, and died at Loretto. The son was very poor, for the father had left him nothing except his sword; his mother had been dead for some years, and to increase his misery, a sore broke out on his left foot, and when it was healed, the right foot was similarly affected.

In the city of Aquila there was a convent in which his uncle was Superior. The young soldier called upon him, and desired to be received into the order; but the Superior suspected that his relative was not sufficiently prepared, and therefore refused to receive him. Camillus—for so was the young soldier called—was still very lame; hearing, however, that there were skillful surgeons at

the hospital of St. James in Rome, he went thither and offered his services as a nurse of the sick, hoping at the same time to have his foot cured. Camillus was received; but unfortunately he was a great gambler, so that instead of attending to the sick, he would leave them and steal out of the hospital in order to play cards, and he was at the same time very quarrelsome. For this reason, therefore, he was dismissed from service, notwithstanding his promise to amend his life.

What was Camillus now to do? The Venetians were just then (1569) engaged in a war with the Turks, and were consequently in want of troops; Camillus enlisted, but the campaign was soon at an end, the soldiers were sent home, and Camillus was again as poor and wretched as ever. In the cold winter, without money and poorly clad, he arrived at Manfredonia, and applied for assistance at the Capuchin Convent. The Fathers took pity on him, and gave him a piece of cloth similar to that which they used for their habits, so that he might cover his nakedness; they also gave him some work, for they were obliged that winter to build an addition to their convent. Camillus consequently could have saved some money, if it had not been for his love of play; but his passion for gambling was so great, that he one day lost all that he had.

We remember to have seen in childhood a pictorial Bible, in which hell was represented; among other figures there was one devil, who had cards and dice lying before him. And certainly cards and dice are one of the strong nets of the devil in which he catches so many souls, drawing them down with him into temporal and eternal ruin. Many an innkeeper is in this respect a true apostle of the devil, for how many are there who entice persons, especially boys and young men, to gamble, leading them on step by step, until they are lost. He knows well, that whoever commences to gamble will soon be consumed with a passion for it, so that he cannot live without the society of his gambling companions, that is, he must be in the saloon; the innkeeper also knows, that gamblers drink more than other persons; if they win, they will drink, and if they lose, they will drink to console themselves and to forget their loss of money. A great many have become drunkards by gambling; and even if a man was sure of winning a great sum of money, he should not gamble; for Almighty God does not desire him to make money by cheating others, nor is it His will that others should squander their money, which they should use for charitable purposes. There is no half-way measure to be used, if a man desires to cure himself of gambling; for as with the drunkard, who in order to be saved is obliged to quit drinking at once and entirely, so also is it with the gambler, who can only be saved by resolving never again to touch a card or dice. One who, like Camillus is inclined to gamble, may learn from his example how to break himself of the habit, and like him become a virtuous Christian. In Baden-Baden every year some gambler commits suicide after losing all. Camillus also killed himself after losing all he had won in gambling; but he killed, not his

body, but rather his former manner of living, that is, he died to sin and entered upon a new life of holiness. The grace of God working quietly within him, and his stay with the Capuchins, gradually softening his heart, his loss at gambling and the admonition of the guardian effected his complete conversion at the age of twenty-five. He sorrowfully lamented and despised his former mode of life, and made a vow to become a Capuchin, in order to do penance for the rest of his life. Upon his earnest petition he was received as a lay-brother; but as the rough habit soon re-opened his wound, he was dismissed He returned to the hospital of St. James in Rome, where he once had been, and upon being received, nursed the sick; but his conduct was very different from what it had previously been, so that he was a model for all who attended the sick.

After four months, when his leg was again well, he made another attempt to become a Capuchin; his wound, however, opened again and caused him to return to the hospital of St. James, where on account of his good conduct he was made overseer. He watched day and night with the sick, made their beds, arranged their rooms, dressed their ulcers, and assisted the dying in order to ease their sufferings as much as possible, and to prepare them by his exhortations and prayers for a happy death. He chose St. Philip Neri for his confessor, and when he saw how the nurses, although paid for their services, took little or no care of the patients, he resolved to form a society of religious persons, who would devote themselves out of true Christian love to the care of the sick. He found five men who were willing to join him; but, as it often happens, if we wish to perform a work pleasing to God, the devil will throw obstacles in our way. The managers of the hospital declared the visits of these men to be an innovation, and prohibited their coming; Camillus, however, in his grief was consoled and strengthened by Almighty God. A friend, to whom he related the whole affair, advised him to become a priest, as he would then find it easier to form a religious society than as a layman. Camillus, although thirty-two years old, was not ashamed to commence his studies. He went to the Jesuit college, and by his zeal and perseverance attained such knowledge, that he was soon thought worthy of ordination. The managers of the hospital gave him a chapel in which to say mass, and Camillus was now in his new position enabled to find young men, with whose assistance he succeeded in establishing a religious society. They every day visited an hospital, in which they attended the sick with as much love and affection as if the sufferer had been our Saviour; they tenderly nursed those who were attacked with the most loathsome diseases, and were not less attentive to their eternal salvation, by preparing them to receive worthily the holy sacraments, and to die happily. Although this undertaking of Camillus was beautiful and truly Christian, he nevertheless had enemies and opponents; but God did not forsake His servant, for Camillus procured a house for his society, and he obliged the brothers in community to visit and nurse

those also who were sick of the plague, those in prison, and those ill in private houses; and he prescribed the best forms by which the dying would be incited to fervor, faith, hope, and charity, how they should with resignation accept death as a sacrifice and atonement for their sins, and how they should pray to become partakers of the merits of the dying Saviour. Pope Sixtus gave his approbation to this society of "*the servants of the sick.*"

Camillus seeing the members of his society increase more and more, went with twelve of them to Naples, to found there a house of his order. He undertook with his brethren the most horrible and dangerous task of attending the prisoners attacked by pestilence, which noble act cost the life of two of the brothers. In many other cities also he erected houses of his order. When the pestilence afterwards broke out in Rome, Camillus returned thither and exhibited his usual charity, zeal, and courage. In consequence of the running sore on his leg he found it difficult to walk, but he nevertheless visited the hospitals, went from bed to bed, to see if the sick had been properly cared for, and to give them wholesome instruction and consolation. The love of God, with which his heart was filled, was also the subject of his conversation; if in any sermon no mention was made of the love of God, he said that the sermon was like a ring without a diamond.

Camillus suffered for forty years from his leg, and for ten years from the painful disease of the gravel; these and many other evils did he endure with much resignation and patience, and he called them "*the mercies of God.*" At the same time he imposed on himself many severe penances, while from the very moment of his conversion he devoted his whole life and strength to the service of the sick, and all for the sake of Christ. He was so careful to preserve the purity of his conscience, that he went to confession every day, and God showed the pleasure He had in His zealous servant by bestowing upon him the gift of prophecy and miracles. Who had more reason to welcome death than Camillus? but notwithstanding his great sanctity, this humble servant of God exhibited his humility when receiving the last sacraments, saying: "I acknowledge myself, O Lord, to be the greatest of sinners and unworthy to receive the grace which it is Thy wish to bestow upon me, but by reason of Thy infinite mercy, save me, O God; I put my entire trust in the merits of Thy precious blood!" He died, exclaiming: "Jesus, Mary!" at the very hour he had predicted, and in the sixty-fifth year of his age.

ST. MACRINA.

(July 19.)

"Deliverance from Death."

We often see persons give way to immoderate, unreasonable, and sometimes blasphemous grief at the death of a relative or friend. It is natural and lawful to grieve, lament, and weep over the death of dear friends and relatives; the true Christian, however, endeavors to control himself on such occasions, and by submitting to the will of God, moderates his sorrow, conscious that death has lost its sting to those who die in the Lord. It is but a journey to that place where all good Christians meet again. A beautiful model how to bear the death of a relative, and prepare for our own, is given us in St. Macrina, the sister of the two Fathers of the Church, Basil and Gregory of Nyssa. We give some extracts from her life, written by St. Gregory:

"As the child advanced in years, she exhibited a very docile spirit; she learned with ease whatever her mother deemed best for her, and her mother continued to study in order to instruct her daughter. She selected passages from the holy Scriptures which she thought the child could understand; she also read with her at the appointed time a part of the psalms, which Macrina always chanted, on rising from her little bed, before and after her studies, before and after meals, before going to bed, and before prayers.

"When twelve years old, her beauty was so extraordinary tnat no painter could do justice to her. Many sought her hand in marriage. The father gave the preference to a young man of noble birth, and of irreproachable morals, to whom he promised Macrina as soon as she had attained the proper age; but her betrothed's career was brought to a close by sudden death. Macrina then declared her intention never to give her hand to another, saying that her father had betrothed her to one, and that she would not be forced to marry another; that she considered that there was but one marriage, as there was but one birth and one death; that her betrothed was living before God, and it would be unjust not to keep her fidelity to him. She determined to remain with her mother, whom she assisted with much diligence and skill in domestic affairs, taking special interest in the instruction of her younger sisters and brothers, for Emelia was the mother of four sons and six daughters. Her mother, after her father's death, persuaded her to commence a stricter life, and to establish with her servants a religious community, making them not servants, but sisters.

"Naucratius, her second brother, when twenty-two years of age, made a public speech which enraptured the entire audience; but by the effects of divine grace he left all to lead the life of a hermit with one of his servants, named Chrysaphius, on the banks of the river Iris. A few aged men, weakened by

poverty and sickness, dwelling here, became the care of Naucratius and his companion, who endeavored to provide for them by hunting and fishing. Thus Naucratius spent five years in seclusion, when at once a heavy blow fell upon the whole family, for he and his faithful companion Chrysaphius were one day suddenly brought home dead. The mother was at a distance of a three days' journey, and was overcome by grief when she heard the sad news. Macrina became the comfort and consolation of her heart-broken mother. She succeeded in infusing resignation and patience into her parent's soul, and thus the mother struggled against excessive grief. Macrina rose superior to nature, for although she had lost a brother, whom she dearly loved, she proved to her own mother by word and example how sorrow could be overcome by firmness.

"In the community of sisters which this family formed, no anger, envy, or hatred was seen; all desire for honor, respect, and worldly possessions; all pride and self-esteem were banished. Their pleasure consisted in sobriety, their glory in remaining unknown, their treasure in having shaken off the goods of this world—and they considered all the cares of this life as nothing; there existed among them only a strife after divine things, incessant prayer, continued singing of hymns and psalms, and these constituted their labor, and at the same time their rest.

"Macrina brought up her younger brother Peter carefully, being in a manner the child's father, teacher, guardian, mother, and adviser, and her efforts were rewarded with success. Amid all these afflictions she remained firm like an invincible warrior, who is never cast down by the pressure of misfortune."

St. Gregory thus describes her death: "On my arrival home I found Macrina very sick, but she was not lying in her bed, or upon a couch, but on a board placed upon the floor, with a sack beneath her. When she saw me she rose by leaning her hand upon the floor, for she was too weak to come out to meet me. She thanked God that He had permitted her to see her brother once again, and she endeavored to conceal her illness and painful breathing as much as possible, so as to make my visit agreeable.

"During our conversation concerning the death of our brother Basil, I was moved by grief, and tears streamed from my eyes; Macrina, however, did not give herself up to such sorrow, but, as if inspired by the Holy Ghost, used it as an occasion to speak of the benefits of adversity, of the hidden decrees of God in misfortune, and on the life to come; so that I appeared to myself elevated above human nature. Although the fever had consumed all the strength of her body, she spoke with much wisdom and clearness of eternal things.

"Finally she said: 'Now it is time for you to rest, since, perhaps, you are wearied from your long journey.' I could never tire of looking at her, or of listening to her holy conversation, but I wished to obey my teacher in all things, since it was pleasing to her, and, therefore, I went to the garden, and rested in the shade of the trees. Although the scenery around was attractive and beauti-

ful, I could not enjoy myself, because my heart was oppressed by anxiety and care. As though she had divined my thought, she sent me a message telling me to be of good cheer, because she felt her sickness changing for the better; by which, however, was to be understood that she would soon end this wearisome life, and receive the crown of victory.

"When I returned to her, she related to me all that she knew concerning herself, our parents, and myself; she did this in order to incite herself and me to give thanks to the Giver of all good things. On the following day it could be clearly seen that her sufferings would soon be over. She looked back with heavenly tranquillity upon her past life, and had no dread of her approaching death; she spoke in such a manner that she appeared to me not like a mortal, but like an Angel who, by the command of God, had assumed a human form. As in life she had never desired pleasure, so could not the anguish of death depress or confound her soul, but it only revealed her hidden love and longing for her divine bridegroom.

"The sun was already setting, but she did not lose the serenity of her mind; the nearer death approached, the clearer did she appear to see the beauty of her beloved Lord; she spoke no more with us, but with Him. With folded hands she said in a low tone, so that we could hardly understand her: 'Thou, O Lord, hast taken away from us the fear of death; Thou hast ordained that the end of this worldly life should be but the beginning of eternal life; it is Thy will that we should sleep, until awakened by the sound of the trumpet; it is Thy will that our bodies, formed by Thy hands, should like a treasure be hidden in the earth, and afterwards be taken up again. Whatever is mortal and not beautiful in us, Thou wilt then adorn with immortality and beauty; Thou hast freed us from the curse of sin by dying for us upon the cross; Thou hast destroyed the gates of hell, and overcome him who had dominion over death, and hast opened to us the gate of everlasting happiness. Thou hast, for the enemy's destruction, and for our salvation, given a sign to those who fear Thee, the sign of the Holy Cross. Eternal God, to whom I was offered on the first day of my life, whom my soul has loved with all its strength, to whom I have given my soul and body from my very youth until this hour, give me an Angel of light, who will lead me to the place of rest, in the bosom of the Holy Fathers. Thou who hast broken the sword of fire, and did restore paradise to him who was crucified with Thee, and who had recourse to Thy mercy, remember me also in Thy kingdom, for I also am crucified with Thee by having pierced my flesh with Thy fear. (Ps. 118 : 120.) May my sins be blotted out from before Thee, and if on account of my feeble human nature I have sinned in thought, word, or deed, forgive me, Thou who hast power upon earth to forgive sins, so that my soul, after laying aside the body, may appear before Thy face pure and stainless, and like incense be pleasing in Thy sight.'

"After having spoken these words, she made the sign of the cross upon her

eyes, lips, and heart: her tongue, dried up by the fever, could not utter another word, but the moving of her lips and hands indicated that she was praying. When it had become entirely dark, and a light was brought in, she directed her eyes to it, and endeavored to perform her evening devotion in the usual manner. Having finished her prayers, she raised her hand to make the sign of the cross, breathed once more, and ended at the same moment her prayers and her life."

ST. VULMAR.

(July 20.)

"Ambition."

St. Vulmar was born of noble parents, in the Netherlands. When he reached man's estate, he married a lady named Osterhilda, but after a while was obliged to resign her to another, who claimed her as his wife before the court, asserting that he had espoused her some time previously. Vulmar then resolved at once to embrace a religious life. He applied to the monastery of Altmont (Highmount) and was kindly received by the Abbot. In order to try his obedience, he was told to watch the flocks and saw wood for the fires, which Vulmar did most willingly. Inspired by the Holy Ghost, he desired to learn how to read; and he therefore had the alphabet written down for him upon a small tablet, and when driving the yoke of oxen, he would commit the letters to memory. As soon as the Abbot heard of it, he relieved him of his manual labor, and sent him to the abbey-school.

Vulmar's delight in practicing humility and charity was so great, that every night when the others were asleep, he would quietly take the shoes of the brothers, clean and put them back in their places. The monks could not imagine who did this service for them, and having spoken to the Abbot on the subject, he also left his shoes before the door of his cell, and watched to see who did it. When Vulmar as usual came for the shoes, the Abbot took hold of his habit and asked his name; Vulmar then told who he was, and the Abbot gave him permission to continue his kind offices.

Vulmar prepared bravely for the combat against sin, and served God in humility and meekness, and thus became a model to all the brethren. He was at length considered worthy to receive holy orders; but when honors were offered him and he heard himself praised, he feared to lose the reward promised him in the next world, and determined therefore to seek for some secluded spot.

He came finally to an immense forest, in which he remained for three days and three nights without seeing any one and without food. Almighty God, however, had not forgotten him, but in a dream admonished a good Christian that His servant in the forest was suffering from hunger. Telling his wife of his dream, and that he knew not where to find the servant of God, she told him that if the dream came from God, he would find the holy man; he therefore prepared food, and mounting a horse, allowed it, according to the advice of his wife, to take the road selected by itself, and thus it happened that the horse carried him to the very tree in the forest where the saintly Vulmar was still engaged in prayer. After having related the circumstances of the dream to Vulmar, both praised God, and ate the welcome food. The good man then said to Vulmar: "If you are a servant of Christ, come with me, and I will give you ground on which to build a cell, and where you can direct others to lead a pious life. Vulmar after some time consented, and building a church on the site given him, induced many by his exemplary life to join him. The fame of his sanctity gradually spread abroad, and people from far and near came to see and honor him. In order to avoid their honors, he again determined to leave secretly, and at length took up his abode in a forest not far from his birth-place. He built a hut and served God day and night in fasting, watching, in cold and poverty, in prayer and patience. One day it happened that his own brother in passing through the forest, met him before his hut without recognizing him. On being questioned as to who he was and what he did, Vulmar made himself known, when his brother, filled with joy, invited him to come home and console their mother, who was filled with grief on account of his absence. Vulmar answered: "I shall not go; but my mother and you can assist me with alms as far as your circumstances permit, and I will remember you in my prayers." The brother returned and told the astonished mother how he had found Vulmar, and from that time brought to the pious hermit whatever he needed. Once when bringing him some food and not finding him in his hut, he commenced to call him by his name Vulmar hearing it, hurried back, and told his brother never to call him by his name, as he wished to remain hidden and unknown. He therefore nailed a small piece of board on a tree, upon which his brother was to strike with a wooden hammer, whenever he brought him food and did not find him home; which custom remained in use in the monastery that he afterwards established. He first built a church in the forest; men and women therefore gathered in crowds in order to be instructed by the saintly hermit and thus two houses sprung into existence, one for men and one for women; he was the Superior of the former, and his niece, Tremberta, of the latter. It often happened that the members of both monasteries were in want of the necessaries of life, and many murmured against the servant of God; he, however, encouraged them to have confidence in God and His promise: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be

added unto you!" (Matt. 6 : 33.) And thus it often came to pass, that while St. Vulmar was addressing words of consolation to the brethren, some one would strike with the hammer upon the board outside, indicating thereby that provisions had arrived.

Vulmar trod the narrow path leading to heaven, a path chosen by but few; his garments were wretched and his food miserable; but he was fervent in prayer, fond of reading religious books, industrious, and the praise of the Lord was constantly on his lips; according to the Psalmist: "I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be ever in my mouth." (Ps. 33 : 2.) Those who attracted by the fame of his sanctity came from afar to see him, he strengthened in serving God zealously, and the many rich presents he received, he invariably distributed among the poor.

Twelve centuries have passed away since St. Vulmar lived, and his biography is of a still later date, when all that he labored to accomplish was nearly forgotten; but from the few facts we have been able to gather, it is evident that the Saint possessed great humility, and that he always endeavored to avoid any honors being paid him. The same disposition was also visible in other Saints, so that they despised and fled from the honors of the world, as they despised and fled from sensual and wicked pleasures; for to desire and take delight in earthly honors, is nothing more than the concupiscence of the spirit, by which many are ruined, who otherwise have kept themselves clean from the concupiscence of the flesh. Whoever wishes to be a follower of Christ, must above all things carefully guard against ambition. Do and say nothing with the intention of gaining the praises and honors of men. If without desiring it, special respect is shown you, or you are preferred to others, avoid it by quietly changing the conversation. If you are tempted by ambitious thoughts, desires, and recollections, how you have been praised here or there, dismiss them as you would other evil thoughts. If, however, you are despised and slighted, accept it humbly and think that if the world knew all your sins you would be despised even more.

ST. ARBOGASTUS.

(July 21.)

"Resurrection."

NEAR the city of Hagenau, in Alsace, there is an immense forest, many miles long and wide, in which twelve hundred years ago pious hermits lived, among whom was Arbogastus. He was born in Aquitaine, and received a good education, as it was the wish of his parents, who were very rich, to see their son honored and respected by the world. Arbogastus, however, disappointed their expectations in this regard, by evincing from early youth a contempt for the world and its pleasures. Leaving parents and country, he retired into the forest near Hagenau, where he lived in great sanctity.

Arbogastus, however, did not remain long in his seclusion, for many who were desirous to attain perfection, sought out the holy man, and implored him to instruct and direct them how to serve God. King Dagobert in particular was filled with veneration for Arbogastus, so that he forced the Saint, with the approbation of the Holy See, to accept the bishopric of Strasburg, which had become vacant by the death of Bishop Rotharus.

Arbogastus distinguished himself in his high position by his humility, watchfulness, zeal, and charity; he became all to all by piously governing the Church of God which was confided to him, and was a benefactor to the people by his Christian exhortations, and to the poor by his bounteous alms. His love for seclusion still remained even in the midst of his active life, which, as Bishop, he was compelled to lead; he therefore had a chapel built outside of the city near the shore of the river Ill, to which he retired in the evening after having finished the work of the day, in order to spend the night in prayer.

Almighty God glorified His servant by great miracles even in this life, the most striking of which is the following: "King Dagobert's only son, while hunting, had ridden away from all his attendants and the hounds, when he was attacked by a wild boar. His horse, in its terror, endeavored to run, and the young prince, while endeavoring to rein him in, lost his balance, and was dragged along for some distance. The hunters, after searching for him a long time, finally discovered him in this horrible state, and amid loud lamentations and wailing carried him home half dead. The place where the accident happened, and where afterwards a convent and a village was built, is even now called Ebersheim (Boar's-home) Munster. When the news was brought to the royal palace, all the inmates wept, and the sorrow was universal throughout the city. The first men of the kingdom were confounded and helpless, for they said to one another: 'What will become of us if the king dies without a legitimate successor?' Dagobert himself was in despair. The unfortunate prince

was laid upon the bed, and every attention paid him, but on the following day he expired. The courtiers, consulting together as to the best means to soothe the king's grief, concluded to send for Bishop Arbogastus whom he loved, and in whom he placed great confidence. The king was pleased with this decision, and at once sent messengers to Strasburg, begging Arbogastus to visit him. The residence of the king at that time was Kirchheim (Church-home), not far from the present Molsheim, and Arbogastus, hearing the sad news, was also much grieved, and made haste to comply with the request of the king, who, having impatiently waited for his spiritual adviser, went to meet him, and seeing him approach from afar, burst into tears. - When the king and the holy Bishop met, they could not salute each other, so great was their emotion; but they soon recovered their self-possession, and kissed each other upon the cheek. The queen also came when she heard of the arrival of the servant of God, and weeping and supplicating fell down on her knees before him, as Martha and Mary once wept and entreated for their brother. Arbogastus raised her up without asking her what she wished him to do, for he understood the meaning of her tears. St. Arbogastus now proceeded to the chapel, and refusing to partake of any food, remained there all night praying for the deceased prince. At the dawn of the day he went quietly to the room where the body lay, and having dismissed all who were watching, he knelt down and invoked the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, begging her who had brought forth the Life to obtain from her Son the life of the prince. Divided between hope and fear, he awaited in constant prayer the assistance of God, who did not leave His servant long in distress and suspense, for while Arbogastus was still praying the dead youth lifted up his head, as if he had been in a deep slumber, and in doubt whether he was asleep or awake. The Saint seeing his hope and confidence in God so gloriously answered and fulfilled, went joyfully to the bed, raised up the young prince, and called the servants to take off the shroud. Those who were near burst forth into loud cries of joy, and filled the palace with the sounds of rejoicing. All those who were asleep, awoke and inquired as to the cause of the great noise. The king himself, who for grief had not slept since the death of his son, had just fallen into a slumber when he was awakened by the tumult and confusion; he hurried to the room where the body of the young prince lay as all the sounds seemed to proceed from that direction."

You may imagine, dear reader, how great was the happiness of his parents and friends, when the young prince was so miraculously resuscitated from the dead; and hence you may judge what an infinitely more joyful Easter it will be when at the resurrection all good Christians, free from all sorrows, will meet their children, parents, husbands, wives, sisters, brothers, friends, and all whom they love upon earth. Not a moment passes in which some one is not called upon to weep for the dying and the dead, for the reason that there is not a moment in which hundreds of people are not summoned from this world; but

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ST. MARY MAGDALEN.

(July 22.)

"Penance"

Many confessionals bear a picture of this great penitent, and they seem to sa: "If you wish forgiveness of your sins, your sorrow, humility, and love mst be that of St. Mary Magdalen." Every Christian knows what the Scriptures say of the penitent who anointed the feet of the Lord; there are, however, many traditions regarding her, and we cite some from an ancient life.

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The biographer, with many Fathers of the Church, admits that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, and Mary Magdalen the penitent, were one and the same

person. Martha endeavored long but in vain to convert her sister, and one day related to her that a great Prophet had come among them, performing many and wonderful deeds, cleansing Simeon from leprosy, and raising the daughter of a centurion to life. From these miracles he was taken to be the expected Messiah, promised to the fathers; He was preaching everywhere, and she asked her sister to go if but once and hear Him. Magdalen, however, did not like to be importuned, and at first declined; but her heart became softened at the words addressed to her by Martha, and she said: "Dear sister, in order to gratify your wish, I will go to-morrow with you to hear Him; but I shall go richly dressed as usual." Martha thanked her sister and said: "You can dress as you like; I will dress as I do every day." After her return, Martha spent the whole night praying for the conversion of her sister. Magdalen, arrayed in one of her most costly dresses, started early the next day for the place near Jerusalem, where great crowds had gathered to hear Christ preach, and the eyes of all were fixed upon her. Many comments upon her appearance were made by the people, who saw she had not come to listen from devotion, but to be seen and looked at. The pious and humble Martha was mortified at the attention her sister attracted, and at the remarks made upon her appearance, so that she did not raise her eyes until they had come to the temple. Our Saviour was standing before the people, and Magdalen was as usual turning her head hither and thither. Christ looked upon Magdalen, and Magdalen upon the Saviour, who looked at her as He will look on the day of the last judgment upon the damned. Magdalen, seeing His face, was filled with fear; her whole body began to tremble; she turned pale, and her countenance looked like death. She felt so weak, that she could neither sit nor stand, and therefore slipped from the seat to the ground, and all the people wondered to see her in such a position. Almighty God, however, did not wish her to remain in this terrible state, but He consoled her with a special grace; for as Magdalen longed to hear our Lord preach, she looked up very humbly at Him; the Lord also looked at her, as He now looks at all the elect in heaven, and Magdalen commenced to burn with such love towards God, and her heart was penetrated with such sorrow for her sins, that she wept most bitterly in the presence of the Saviour and the assembled multitude. Weeping and sorrowing, Magdalen said to her sister: "Woe is me, what have I done? Why have I forsaken my God and my Creator? What shall I do? How shall I stand before the face of God? Why have I not obeyed my sister Martha—O wicked flesh, false pleasures, and ye evil spirits, how have you deceived me! I am sorry to have committed such wicked and grievous sins!" She kept constantly repeating these words, until at length Martha said to her: "Dear sister, despair not, but be consoled, and do not disturb the Prophet in His discourse; God is good and merciful, He will certainly forgive your manifold sins, for His mercy is greater than our sins; listen, therefore, with attention to the word of God."

When our Saviour saw that Magdalen's heart had been pierced with the two arrows of the fear and the love of God, He commenced to speak of the hidden treasure, the lost sheep and the groat, but particularly of the prodigal son. While listening to the discourse, Magdalen commenced to unclasp her golden chains and rich ornaments, and was ashamed that she had ever been so proud and had given so much scandal; she wept bitterly and said: "Almighty God, have mercy on me a poor sinner;" with her eyes humbly cast down she struck her breast and said: "What shall I, a poor wretched sinner, do? Where can I hide from the wrath of God?" Such, and similar expressions, did she use with so much modesty, that the people around her were edified. The pious Martha consoled her as much as possible, and said: "My dear sister, do not be so disheartened, for you know that God is merciful and ready to forgive, if the sinner sincerely calls upon Him for grace, and is resolved to be sorry for his sins, and never to offend Him again."

On returning home, Magdalen in sorrow and tears retired alone to her room, and directed all her thoughts to God; she finally left the house, and that same day went in search of the Lord. She asked every one whom she met in the street where the Master and great Prophet could be found. She found Him, and, according to the Gospel, she anointed the feet of the Lord, and the Lord commended her act and forgave her all the sins of her life.

The loving and worthy penitent Magdalen then returned home to her brother's house, and there commenced to weep for joy; and those who witnessed this, said among themselves: "Perhaps the Prophet did not receive her, because she was a public sinner." This and many other things were said, but Magdalen heeded them not. Meanwhile Martha had heard of what had happened to her sister, and when they met, they embraced one another, and their emotion was so great that neither could speak for some time, until finally Martha said to Magdalen: "You are now consoled, dear sister." Magdalen made no answer but when Martha questioned her concerning her feelings, Magdalen answered: "My dear sister, I never felt as well and as happy as I do this day; all that you told me concerning the Lord is true, for He is not only beautiful in appearance, but He is also kind, humble, affable, and very merciful. When I first beheld Him, His looks were terrible and very grave, so that it was impossible for me to look at Him without fear and trembling; but when I looked at Him the second time, His expression was so kind, that I am sure I have never seen a more lovely and gracious countenance, and when I heard His sweet words, and considered them in my heart, they were so full of wisdom that they penetrated into the very depths of my heart. In His sermon He called me to penance, and I resolved to serve Him all the days of my life, and to be sincerely and truly penitent for all the sins I had committed." Martha then kissed her sister, and said: "God be praised forever, my dear sister, because He has bestowed upon you such abundant grace and mercy; now you are truly my

beloved sister Magdalen; be cheerful, therefore, and consoled, for our dear Master will not forsake us, but will teach us the will of God, and instruct us in all good works." Magdalen then said to Martha: "As long as I wear these sinful garments I shall imagine that I am not changed; I therefore beg of you, dear sister, to lend me some of your dresses, until I have something plainer made." Martha rejoiced at this request, sent for some of her own clothes, and gave them to her sister, who laid aside her own worldly garments forever.

Magdalen thus converted, was so filled with zeal and love, that she desired to do, speak, and hear nothing, but what had reference to her beloved Saviour; and she, therefore, in company with some other holy women followed the Lord in order to satisfy her thirst after the divine teachings.

The biography then mentions the visit of the Lord in the house of Lazarus, and the conduct of the two sisters—as related in the Gospel—then the resuscitation of Lazarus, and, finally, how Magdalen stood at the foot of the cross, and how she was honored in being the first who saw the Lord after His resurrection. When afterwards a persecution of the Christians broke out in Jerusalem, it is said that Magdalen with her brother and sister fled to Marseilles in France, and, as it was her vocation to lead a contemplative life, she is said to have retired to a cave in which she lived for thirty years.

Conversion and penance are something wonderful; in it is glorified one of the greatest attributes of God—His Mercy. The joy of God and the Angels at the conversion of one sinner is like the lightning in the heavens, for it is reflected even in the heart of the sinner himself; for while the world considers penance to be bitter and sad, it fills the heart of the sinner with such consolation and joy, that thousands of sinners have said with Magdalen that after their conversion they feel as though they had just commenced to live.

Try the remedy, dear reader, if you are in a state of sin, and you will find that what was said by Magdalen will be true also in your case.

EZECHIEL THE PROPHET.

(July 23.)

"Prophetic Words."

NABUCHODONOSOR was a powerful king of Babylon; he marched against Joiachim, king of Juda, with a large army, and besieged Jerusalem. The Jewish king, finding further resistance useless, opened the gates of the city, and submitted to the conqueror, who took the king and many noble Jews captives to Babylon. Among these was Ezechiel, the son of a high-priest. During his stay in Babylon he was called to be a Prophet by the Lord, and he spent nearly thirty years in communicating to the Jews the decrees and the will of God, and in encouraging them to remain faithful. His prophecies, contained in the Old Testament, number forty-eight chapters. He prophesied that, on account of the many and grievous sins of the people, Jerusalem would soon be destroyed.

Seven years after this prophecy, King Joiachim wished to free himself from his bondage, and refused the usual gifts. Nabuchodonosor then marched with a large army against Judea, and encamped before the city of Jerusalem, which city was besieged for one year and a half, then conquered and destroyed. Thus was fulfilled what the Lord had announced by Ezechiel.

If God, however, through the mouth of His Prophets had predicted future events to the people which were really fulfilled, he had this special object in view to incite the faith of the people by the instructions and admonitions of the Prophets. for they were not called only to predict future events, but they were also sent by the Lord as teachers, followers of Moses, and forerunners of the Saviour, and as it were as mediums—middle-members—between Moses and Christ. For this reason many edifying truths are to be found in the writings of the Prophets, because the Holy Ghost spoke through them, as He did through the Apostles. We will, therefore, point out a chapter from the Prophet Ezechiel, (Ezechiel 33 : 1–20,) in which some very earnest and important truths are contained for the clergy as well as for the laity.

Of the two important lessons which Almighty God here gives us through His Prophet, one applies to the priests, parents, teachers, and to every one whose duty it is to admonish and warn others. If you neglect these admonitions and warnings, and those under your care continue to sin, they will be punished, but you will also be held to account. If, for instance, any one swears falsely, and the clergyman by whom he was instructed gives either insufficient or no instruction on that subject, both will incur the judgment of God. The other lesson encourages the sinner to be converted; he should not be cast down by the enormity of his sins, for God willingly forgives the true penitent; the virtuous man, on the contrary, should not have too much confidence in his works, or

imagine that he cannot fall into sin; for one single mortal sin destroys all our claims to eternal happiness.

ST. FRANCIS SOLANO.

(July 24.)

"Martyr by Desire."

Although of a noble family, St. Francis Solano entered the convent of the poor Franciscans at Montitia in Spain, and even when a novice exceeded the rule in his works of penance. Yet, considering himself a poor sinner, he endeavored to make others believe so, and in his humility thought every one better than himself. He was so careful in his speech that those who were for years around him testified never to have heard him speak an idle word. His obedience was so great that nothing of his own will was left; whenever the decision of any affair was left to him, he declined to give an opinion, and begged the superior to decide, and he would obey. Prayer was his recreation and life; he always spent an hour in preparing himself for the prayers in the choir, and his devotion towards the most Blessed Sacrament was so great that he sometimes passed the whole night on the steps of the High-Altar in meditation, prayer, and in singing hymns. In saying Mass his devotion was supernatural; he was often seen suspended in the air; once a pious person saw him when coming out of the sacristy to say Mass surrounded by a brilliant light; it was for these reasons that all the lay-brothers, and even some of the first officers of the country desired to serve his Mass.

Recognizing in every man the image of God, St. Francis honored and loved every one as a child of the Father, a redeemed member of the Son, and a temple of the Holy Ghost; he spoke humbly to the poor, and gave them whatever he had, but, above all, he gave them good advice, and exhorted them rather to starve from hunger than to offend God. He reconciled enemies, visited prisoners, and encouraged them to be patient, reminding them at the same time what hardships and pains Christ suffered for them. The greatest love, however, he bestowed upon the sick; he waited on them in the hospitals, consoled them, made their beds, and heard their confession. Although sometimes very much fatigued, his face was always cheerful, and he was never heard to utter a word of impatience; he rather wished to pray less, in order to have more time to

assist the sick. He was kind and affable in his manners, so that all who conversed with him were consoled, refreshed, and made happy.

His only desire was that God should be loved; he often preached publicly in the city with such eloquence that the hearers were wonderfully moved. Frequently, when passing through the streets, and seeing how people were actively engaged in business, but almost dead to God, he would raise the crucifix before them, and address them so impressively that all were moved by his language, and he would say with tears: "Love God, and offend Him not; it was for your sake that he died upon the cross; adore Him, for He is the highest good; do not crucify Him again by your sins!" He even went to the ball-rooms and theatres, and, after the play had commenced, he would climb upon a bench or go upon the stage itself, hold up the crucifix, and in a loud voice, and with tears streaming from his eyes, invite all present to meditate upon the sorrowful drama which had been performed on Calvary, where the Son of God had died upon the cross, and he would then speak so earnestly of divine things that those who heard him gave up their pleasures, and were converted to sorrow and repentance.

It was impossible to overcome his patience by any temptation. One of the most distinguished members of the order determined to try him. When sick in bed, and surrounded by many clergymen who had come to visit him, he saw Father Francis coming in; at once the sick man called him a fool and hypocrite, and bade him leave his room at once. St. Francis showed no indignation, but rejoicing to receive such treatment, smiled, and told the sick religious that he had only uttered the truth.

The stronger the love of God is in a man, the more pleasure and desire he will have to give his life for God, and we can, therefore, justly say that every Saint has been a martyr in spirit, that is, it was his wish to sacrifice his life out of love to God. This disposition we find in St. Francis Solano. In the year 1583 several cities in Andalusia were visited by a horrible pestilence; many fled, but St. Francis remained in the city, and begged permission to attend the sick; for the love of God and of his neighbor incited him even to expose his life. He was also attacked by the pestilence, but recovered, and immediately continued his service among the sick until the plague had disappeared in Montero.

His desire to suffer martyrdom for Christ was so strong that he petitioned the General of the order for permission to go to Africa among the Saracens or Turks in order to preach the Gospel to them. God, however, who had destined His servant for other fields, decreed that his petitions should be refused. At the same time Philip II., king of Spain, wished to have the Indians of Peru converted to Christianity; our Saint, desirous of sacrificing his life for Christ, offered his service, and he embarked for America to commence the holy work. Arriving at the island of St. Domingo they cast anchor, and the priests went ashore, but by some misunderstanding the ship sailed in the evening without having them on board. St. Francis, expecting to be put to death by the In-

dians, spent the night in prayer, and in chanting hymns to prepare for martyrdom. By the will of God, however, it happened that the ship returned, and the priests were taken on board.

Near Sorgona, the ship was driven by a storm on the rocks, and began to fill with water, so that the long-boat was let down to save the passengers; a part of them were already in it, when all demanded that St. Francis should also join them. The greater part of the passengers, however, consisting of Moors, had to remain on the wreck. The Saint, however, declared that it would be unbecoming in a priest to leave so many brethren exposed to danger, and, therefore, at the risk of his life, he remained on board, exhorting and consoling those who were left. He gathered the Moors around him, instructed them in the most essential truths of religion as far as time permitted, and asked them if they wished to be baptized, in order to see the face of God in heaven? Each, with uplifted hands, answered YES, and showed a fervent desire to receive baptism; whereupon the servant of God, with the greatest joy, baptized them all. The next instant the ship was split in two, owing to the violence of the waves that dashed against it, so that one half of the wreck went down with all on board, while St. Francis with the rest remained on the other half. While all were weeping and lamenting, St. Francis Solano raised aloft his crucifix, and begged them not to lose confidence, for God would in His mercy preserve them all. He then prayed most fervently, heard their confession, and consoled them by speaking to them of heaven. After three days and three nights of momentary expectation of death, the waves threw a wax-candle upon the wreck, which they lighted, and set up on the highest point of the wreck. Those on the shore who supposed them lost, at once went to their rescue. St. Francis Solano again refused to enter the boat until all were saved, but as soon as he was taken on board, the wreck immediately went down, to the astonishment of all.

We can, therefore, justly call St. Francis Solano A MARTYR BY DESIRE. Many persons imagine that they would also be ready to undergo martyrdom for their religion, and some perhaps consider themselves martyrs by desire as he was, because they have often expressed a wish to suffer death for Christ's sake, but the sincerity of their desire is proved when God sends them great affliction; if they bear it with patience, because God so wills it, then there is hope that in case of persecution they may courageously suffer martyrdom; but if they lament and complain in adversity, they will most probably deny their faith in time of persecution.

The Almighty gave His servant another opportunity of showing his fidelity, and of evincing his faith; for during his sickness, which lasted many years, he never murmured, but was always cheerful. In his last sickness he had a crucifix set up before his bed, and thanked God for having visited him with such great affliction, and for having made him a sharer in His sufferings. He would often say: "O faithful Friend, O true Father, be blessed and praised forever, who

out of kindness and infinite love for me has suffered death upon the cross." On another occasion he said: "O my Lord, Thou art my Creator, my King, my Father, my Friend, my All!" but he never prayed that his sufferings might be shortened.

His death was beautiful and most wonderful. When he was dying, and the friars were reciting the commendations of a departing soul, birds of beautiful plumage came and perched upon the iron cross-bars of his cell, and sung most sweetly for five hours without being frightened at the concourse of so many people, but after his death they were never seen again. When the priest said the creed, and came to the words: "*He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,*" the bell, which was generally rung at the elevation, commenced to ring of itself. St. Francis embraced the crucifix, and devoutly saying: "The Lord be praised!" gave up his spirit. After death his face looked more beautiful and amiable than it had ever looked in life; the body emitted a very sweet odor, and Almighty God glorified His deceased servant by manifold miracles.

FEAST OF ST. JAMES, THE GREATER, APOSTLE.

From Bayerle.

(July 25.)

St. James, the Greater (as he is called to distinguish him from the other Apostle James), was the brother of St. John, the Evangelist, and the son of Zebedee and Salome, the latter being a relative of the most Blessed Virgin Mary. He was born at Bethsaida, and, like his brother, was a fisherman by occupation. After he had been called to the Apostleship, he was one of the three Apostles whom the Saviour especially honored with His confidence, and whom He chose to witness some of the actions that He withheld from the eyes of the rest, as, for instance, His transfiguration on Mount Thabor, and the beginning of His Passion on the Mount of Olives. James, like his brother John, was possessed of a fiery spirit, and, like him, also was penetrated with a great love for Jesus, and zeal for His honor; wherefore the Saviour gave to the two brothers the name of Sons of Thunder.

Introit of the Mass.—Ps. 138.

"To me thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honorable; their principality is exceedingly strengthened. Lord, thou hast proved me and known

me; thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up." Glory be to the Father.

PRAYER.

Be Thou, O Lord, the sanctifier and guardian of Thy people, that, defended by the protection of Thy Apostle James, they may please Thee by their conduct, and serve Thee with secure minds. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—1 Cor. 4: 9—15.

"Brethren: I think that God hath set forth us apostles the last, as it were, men appointed to death: because we are made a spectacle to the world, and to Angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ: we are weak, but you are strong: you are honorable, but we without honor. Even unto this hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode, and we labor working with our own hands: we are reviled, and we bless: we are persecuted, and we suffer it. We are blasphemed, and we entreat: we are made as the refuse of this world, the off-scouring of all even until now. I write not these things to confound you: but I admonish you as my dearest children: for if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus by the gospel I have begotten you."

The Church, on the feast of one of the most celebrated Apostles, very appropriately calls upon us to consider these words of St. Paul, wherein that great Apostle of the world describes to the faithful in Christ, in a short but touching manner, the inexpressible sufferings and adversities of the apostolic office, but at the same time also indicates the great and invincible love with which the Apostles, as true disciples of Christ, were filled towards the faithful, and, indeed, for their sake they willingly and joyfully bore those afflictions and troubles.

But the Apostle calls also the attention of the faithful to the fact that heaven and earth, all created beings, the good and the wicked are witnesses of their lives and actions, and attentively watch them, although with different feelings, so that the true disciples of Christ, by their blessed labors, excite on the one side, that is among the worldly and wicked, emotions of hatred and contempt, but on the other side, that is among the holy Angels, and all faithful servants of God, joy, love, and admiration. This should be for all the faithful a great incentive to follow the example of the Apostles, indifferent to the opinion of the world, in no fear of the enemies of God, and undismayed by the obstacles which they will have to encounter in seeking after perfection. St. Bernard makes the following instructive remark upon these words of the great Apostle: "We are a spectacle to the good and wicked—a charitable sympathy moves the former to watch us, and the passion of envy the latter; the former wish us to progress,

the latter wish us to fall. We are between heaven and hell, our labors are watched on all sides, and on all sides they say: 'O, if they would only join us!' And as the eyes of all are fixed upon us, wherever we turn, we should collect all our strength, O brethren, that we may not have received in vain the souls, for which others show so much interest and zeal either for good or evil."

GOSPEL.—Matt. 20 : 20–23.

"At that time: There came to Jesus the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her sons, adoring and asking something of him. Who said to her: What wilt thou? She saith to him: Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answering, said: You know not what you ask. Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink? They say to him: We can. He saith to them: My chalice indeed you shall drink: but to sit on my right or left hand, is not mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father."

Filled with false expectations regarding the kingdom to be established by the Saviour, the two disciples, James and John, instigated by their mother Salome, wished to obtain from the Saviour the first places in that kingdom, but Jesus reproved them for their improper request, and in order to remove their erroneous idea of His kingdom, He made them understand that a foremost place in His kingdom could only be obtained by sharing His sufferings. He called their attention also to the fact that, although they would share His sufferings like the rest of the Apostles, they could not, on that account, claim the first places, the highest honor in His kingdom, since they were prepared, according to the decree of God the Father, for the two disciples, Peter and Paul, distinguished above all their companions for merit and glory.

St. Chrysostom has left us an admirable interpretation of to-day's Gospel; he says: "We must not be surprised at the sight of the imperfection of the Apostles; for the mystery of the cross was not yet revealed and accomplished, and the grace of the Holy Ghost had not yet overflowed their hearts. But if we wish to see what and how powerful the Apostles became after they had received the Holy Ghost, then must we consider the heroic courage with which they conquered their weakness and all their natural infirmities. The apostolic history reveals to us their defects in order to make us feel the more deeply and clearly the high degree of perfection to which grace elevated them. We know that before they had asked for nothing spiritual, nor thought of the heavenly kingdom. Their request is a sufficient proof of that. We wish, they say, that Thou mayest give us whatever we desire. Upon which Christ replies: 'What then is your desire? He knew well the longing of their hearts; but He desired them to express it in words, so that the wound might show itself, and be healed by Him. James and John had heard Christ say that His disciples, seated on

twelve thrones, would judge the tribes of Israel; their wish, therefore, was to obtain in this kingdom of Christ the foremost place on the throne as judges, and to be the first among His disciples. They feared that the preference might be given to Peter, and, therefore, their mother ventured to say to the Lord: 'Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom.' But what was the reply of the Lord? In order to show them that their desire was not according to His spirit, and that they would not have expressed it if they had understood its meaning, He said to them: 'You know not what you ask. You know not that what you ask is so great, so extraordinary, and so far exceeding all higher powers.' And he added: 'Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of, or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?' (Mark 10: 38.) Consider, how the Lord quickly suppresses the immoderate ambition of the two brothers by representing to them things so very contrary to their request. For His words to them mean: You aspire to honors and crowns, but I can only offer you sufferings and labor. Know that the present time is not that of joy and reward, and that my glory is not yet revealed, but that it is a time of suffering, danger and death. Yet, remark how He attracts and exhorts them by His manner of questioning. For He says not: 'Can you suffer defeat and death, and bring the sacrifice of your blood?' but, 'Can you drink of the chalice?' and then continues, 'that I drink of?' that they might feel more encouraged by His participation in the struggle and suffering."

After the descent of the Holy Ghost, St. James preached the Gospel in Judea for three years with great zeal and success; after the separation of the Apostles, probably about the year thirty-seven, he went to Spain, where, by his untiring zeal and the assistance of divine grace, he established a Christian community, and provided it with clergy.

After having also preached the Gospel of Christ in other parts, he returned to Jerusalem about the year forty-two. His zeal enraged the Jews, and at the instigation of the high-priest Abiathar, the Saint was seized, and brought before the tribunal of King Herod Agrippa. There he was accused of sorcery, and of seducing the people. Herod, who sought every opportunity to gain favor with the people, sentenced the Apostle to be beheaded.

While being led to the place of execution, James miraculously cured a sick person, on which his guard was converted. Both suffered martyrdom on Mount Calvary in the year forty-four, a few days before Easter, according to tradition the twenty-fifth day of March, the very day on which our Saviour was crucified ten years before. The body of St. James was afterwards taken to Spain, and enshrined in the principal church of Compostella on the twenty-fifth of July. Thousands of pilgrims still continue to visit the holy relics.

ST. ANN.

(July 26.)

"Blessing of Children.'

We find nothing in the Bible as to the parents of the blessed Virgin Mary. The gospel attributed to St. James is a very ancient work, and although it does not possess the authority of the Holy Scriptures, its contents may nevertheless be true. In the primitive ages of Christianity, passages from it were read in the different churches. "Joachim," it says, "was very rich, and, according to custom, offered up two-fold gifts to the Lord in the temple, saying: 'My abundance shall be for the welfare of the people, and for the forgiveness of my sins, that the Lord may show mercy to me.' The great day of the Lord, however, was nigh, and the sons of Israel offered up their gifts; but one of the tribe of Ruben stood opposite Joachim, and said: 'It is not lawful for thee to bring thy offerings first, because thou hast not raised up seed in Israel.' Joachim became very sad, went home, and from thence retired to the solitude, where his flocks were grazing. He built there a hut, fasted forty days and forty nights, and said to himself: 'I will not return home to eat or drink until the Lord has looked upon me in mercy, and prayer shall be my food.'

"Ann, his wife, however, was oppressed with a two-fold grief, and lamented for a two-fold cause, saying: 'I will mourn on account of my widowhood, and lament on account of my barrenness.' The great day of the Lord was approaching, and Judith, her servant, said: 'How long wilt thou mourn in thy soul? Behold, the great day of the Lord is nigh, and it is not becoming in thee to mourn. Take this head-band, given to me by my former mistress, and bind it upon thy brow. I cannot wear it, because I am thy slave, but it will become thee, for thou hast the appearance of a queen.' And Ann said: 'Depart from me, I will not grant thy request; although God has humbled me very much; perhaps a seducer has given it to thee, and now thou wouldst make me a partaker in thy sin.' Judith then replied: 'What evil shall I wish thee, since thou wilt not listen to my voice? I can wish thee nothing worse, than that with which the Lord hath afflicted thee in closing thy womb, so that thou canst not bring forth children in Israel.' At hearing these words, Ann was very much grieved, and she went down into the garden to walk. Seeing a laurel tree, she sat beneath it, and praying to the Lord, she said: 'O God of my fathers, give me Thy holy blessing and hear my petition, as Thou hast heard and blessed the womb of Sara, and given her a son, Isaac!' Looking up to heaven she saw a sparrow's nest in the tree, and lamenting in her heart, she said: 'Woe is me! Who hath begotten me? Who hath brought me forth,

that I should be one accursed before the eyes of the sons of Israel? I am despised, mocked at, and expelled from the temple of the Lord my God. Woe is me! To what can I be compared? Not to the birds of heaven, for they are fruitful in Thy sight! Woe is me! To what can I be compared? Not to the unreasoning beasts of the earth, for they also are fruitful in Thy sight. Woe is me! To what can I be compared? Not to the waters of the sea, for the fish in them praise Thee, O Lord! Woe is me! To what can I be compared? Not even to the earth, for it brings forth fruit in its time, and praises Thee, O Lord!' And behold, an angel coming to her, said: 'Ann, Ann! God the Lord hath heard thy prayer; thou shalt conceive and bring forth, and thy seed shall be blessed throughout the whole world.' Ann, however, said: 'As true as the Lord my God liveth, when I shall have brought forth a son or a daughter, I will offer it up to the Lord, my God, and it shall be destined to His service all the days of its life.' To Joachim also, did the angel appear, saying: 'Joachim, Joachim! the Lord hath heard thy petition; depart from here; behold Ann, thy wife, shall conceive.' Joachim then came down with his herdsmen, and Ann, standing at the door of her house, saw him and his herdsmen coming, and running to meet him, she said: 'Now I know that God hath blessed me; for behold the widow is no longer a widow, and she who was barren shall conceive.'

"The following day, Joachim offered up his gifts, and said in his heart: 'The golden plate of the priest shall show me whether the Lord is merciful to me.' Joachim looked at the golden plate of the priest, when going up to the altar of the Lord, and found no blemish in it; he then said: 'I now see that the Lord has been merciful to me, and has taken away my sins from me.' And he left the temple of the Lord justified, and returned home full of joy and praising God.

"When the child was born, Ann said to the midwife: 'Is it a son or a daughter?' and hearing that it was a daughter, she said: 'My soul doth praise the Lord!' and she called the child MARY.

"When the child was one year old, Joachim prepared a great feast, and invited the priests and the doctors of the law, the elders and others of the people of Israel, and Joachim carried the child to the priests, who, blessing it, said: 'God of our fathers, bless this child, and give her a name which shall be honored by all nations.' And all the people answered, saying: 'Amen!' After this they carried the child back to the sanctuary of its little room, and Ann, who was waiting to receive her daughter, sang a hymn of praise to the Lord, saying: 'I will sing a hymn of praise to the Lord, my God, because He has looked upon me in His mercy, and has taken away my reproach from before my enemies, and has given me a fruit of justice, beautiful and abundantly rich; for it can now be announced to the sons of Ruben, that Ann is a mother.'

"Having seen her child asleep, Ann then went out and served the guests. After the feast all returned home joyfully, praising the Lord of Israel. When

the child was two years old, Joachim said to Ann: 'Let us carry it into the temple, and fulfill the promise which we have made, so that the Lord may not turn His face from us and reject our offerings.' And Ann said: 'Wait until the child is three years old; she might otherwise desire to return home with us;' to which Joachim consented.

"The child had now reached its third year, and Joachim said: 'Let us assemble the daughters of Israel, and let them light all the lamps, so that the child may not turn back from the temple of the Lord.' All this was accomplished when they had entered the temple, and the priest in receiving the child, kissed and blessed it, saying: 'God the Lord hath made thy name great to all generations, and in thee shall be made known the redemption of the children of Israel.' The parents then returned, wondering and praising God, because the child had not turned around towards them; and Mary was brought up in the temple of the Lord like a doye, and she received food from the hand of an angel."

The Gospel of St. James contains nothing more in relation to St. Ann, but enough has been said, dear reader, for you to understand from the example of this pious mother, how the blessing of having children is to be considered. It is quite natural for married people to express a wish that Almighty God would give them children; but whether this wish is pleasing to God, depends upon the reason why you wish it. If it is only on account of the pleasure which you have in children, or because you think that they can be a help to you in your old age, or because you desire to have an heir to your name and fortunes, your wish is a worldly one, and full of self-interest. Although Ann desired to have a child, because in her time and among her nation it was considered a disgrace to be childless; her principal desire was, that God might be glorified by her becoming a mother. As soon as she had the promise that her wish was to be fulfilled, she at once offered up the promised child to God, and she showed so much earnestness about it, that she separated herself from her only child when it was but three years old, in order to have it brought up in the temple as a virgin, consecrated to God. Remember, if you have children, they belong properly to God, and not to you; bring them up, therefore, for God; He has confided them to you for that purpose, and made you their guardians only. Be not too solicitous as to what will be most agreeable and pleasing to the child or to yourself, but ask yourself rather, what God would like you best to do.

Not much is known of the life of St. Ann, but as the mother of the blessed Virgin Mary she has been highly venerated from the earliest times until the present day. The Greeks celebrate the feast of St. Ann three times in the year. In the East and West, churches have been erected in her honor, and many miracles are related by which those have received help, who in confidence invoked the intercession of St. Ann.

ST. AURELIUS.

(July 27.)

"Mixed Marriages."

THE Christians of Spain in the tenth century were compelled to suffer great oppressions and persecution from the Saracens who ruled the land. At that time there lived in the city of Cordova, Aurelius, a young man of noble descent, and of immense riches. His Mahometan father and Christian mother died when he was but a child; he was, however, most carefully brought up by his aunt, who instructed him so that he became firm in the Christian religion. His father's relatives insisted upon his studying the Arabian sciences, which, however, did not pervert him from his faith or love for the Catholic Church. Not being allowed to attend the services of the Catholic Church, he recommended himself to the prayers of the priests. His relatives now insisted upon his marrying, but as it was his determination to marry a Christian, he begged Almighty God to aid him in obtaining a pious helpmate, and his prayers were heard, for he found a virgin, Natalia (Sabigotho) who possessed all the desired qualifications, for she was secretly a Christian—her Moslem father having died, and her mother been married to a Christian, who converted them both.

If, therefore, two persons of different faith marry, the Catholic party incurs great risk. If the Catholic party consents that the children be brought up Protestants, it is as though he said: "I do not believe in the Catholic Church, and, therefore, my children will lose nothing, if they are not instructed in the doctrines of the Catholic Church, or if they are deprived of the holy Sacraments and of the holy sacrifice of the Mass;" or else, "I believe in the Catholic Church, but I cannot marry this woman or this man if I do not consent to the Protestant education of the children; the pleasure and the temporal advantages are of more value to me than religion, sacraments, and the eternal salvation of my children." Mixed marriages have always been disapproved, and they cannot be contracted in the Catholic Church, unless the promise is made that the children of the marriage shall be Catholics, and even then the marriage is never performed in the Church or blessed.

During the persecution of Abderrama, Aurelius, once passing through the market-place, saw a Christian who had been scourged, and afterwards loaded with heavy irons; he was tied backwards upon an ass, while the Saracens cried out that the punishment was not half enough, and that they intended to put him to death. Aurelius was suddenly seized with a desire to suffer martyrdom, astonished at the firmness of the Christian who preferred to suffer insults and pain rather than deny his religion.

When he came home, he related to his wife all that he had seen, and then said, full of animation: "Dearest wife, you have often rebuked me for my in-

difference to God, and although I have frequently determined to commence a better life, I still delayed; but now let us commence by leading a life of continency in order to advance the more in perfection; Almighty God will perhaps reward us by bestowing upon us the crown of martyrdom."

His wife cheerfully consented, and from that time they lived together in continency; they fasted often, prayed, recited the psalms which they knew by heart, and meditated frequently on the passion and death of Christ; they served the poor, and took care of the destitute; they visited the Christians who were imprisoned on account of their faith in order to console and encourage them, and also to recommend themselves to their prayers. They had two daughters, one eight years old, and the other five; but their love for them did not prevent them from serving God. In order to detach themselves from the world they sold what they had, and used the proceeds for charitable purposes; one part only did they keep for their children, as they were convinced that a truly Christian example would be of greater advantage to them than worldly riches.

Natalia was at home, and praying that Christ would lead her to martyrdom, when suddenly she saw a beautiful virgin standing near her who announced to her that her prayer was heard. The promise was really fulfilled a few days after; for Aurelius, his wife, and some friends, were brought before the Mahometan judge upon some malicious charge, and foreseeing how the trial would terminate, Aurelius went to his children, and gave them the parting kiss; he then asked his Christian friends to pray for him so that he might have strength given him for the combat; they, however, already venerated him as a martyr, begged him to intercede for them, and for the whole Church, and kissed his hands. While this affecting scene was taking place, soldiers appeared before the house, and cried: "Come forth, you wretches, come forth, this time you shall die! The judge will exterminate those who despise our religion; he will behead you. Come now to the tribunal of life and death!" The men and women left joyfully as though they had been invited to a marriage-feast, or as if about to appear before a judge who would distribute rewards. When brought before the judge, he first asked them why they had not adhered to the Mahometan religion, whether they were tired of life, whether they intended to throw away all the pleasures and the goods of this world, and what they would possess if their lives were taken away from them? "All the riches of this world," they replied, "are not to be compared with the eternal goods of heaven, on account of which we despise this life, through faith in Jesus Christ. Any religion not teaching the belief in the most holy Trinity, despising baptism, and insulting Christians, we entirely reject. That which Christ promises to those who love Him, is inexpressible, and lasts forever." After the martyrs had made declarations of this kind, and exposed the nothingness of the Mahometan religion, the judge cast them into prison; but the martyrs, though loaded with heavy irons, bore their sufferings with cheerfulness, and sang hymns of praise. When the order

came that they were to be led to the place of execution, Natalia began to encourage and strengthen her husband by holy admonitions, while the assembled judges offered them one more opportunity to choose between rich gifts or the sword of the executioner; but the martyrs remained firm in the confession of their faith, for which they were beheaded on the twenty-seventh day of July, 852. The Christians collected their bones, which were venerated as precious relics, and by which many miracles were performed.

St. Eulogius knew this holy couple personally; after their martyrdom he met the youngest child who, although but five years old, earnestly exhorted him to write the lives of her parents, and make known their glorious martyrdom. In order to try her, Eulogius asked: "How much will you give me if I fulfill your wish?" when she answered: "I will ask God to give you heaven."

The wish and desire of this Christian child in Spain, dear reader, is here again fulfilled, after a thousand years have passed away.

ST. BOTWID.

(July 28.)

"Ingratitude."

Botwid was born in Sweden of heathen parents; after he became a man he went to England to trade, and having once sought shelter in the house of a learned and pious priest, he was instructed in the Christian religion, baptized, and taught the way of perfection. Having returned to his native country as a Christian, Botwid, with God's assistance, and by his own admonitions and good example, converted many of his countrymen to the true faith, and God even permitted wonders to be performed in order to assist Botwid in the propagation of Christianity.

One day he, with some friends, went fishing; but Bovin, the owner of the fishing-place, would not permit them to let down their nets, unless they gave him the fourth of what they caught. Botwid crossed over to an island in the lake which belonged to him. The Lord, by giving them, at Botwid's prayer, a large draught of fishes, showed how great is the power of prayer; and the servant of God seeing the wonderful effects of God's mercy, turned to his companions, and said: "Let us praise Him who has made heaven and earth, and all that is contained therein, and who has given us this gift, although undeservedly." Those who had fished for hours without success at the fishing-place of Bovin, saw the wonderful draught of fishes made by Botwid, who gave them his blessing

and permission to fish at his place, and they were also very successful; Bovin caught nothing, evidently in punishment for his avarice and envy. Botwid's virtues, with the report of the miracle, had such an effect upon the pagans that many embraced the Christian faith.

Botwid's faith was strong, and his heart was overflowing with love for God and his neighbor; he, therefore, spared neither his body nor his possessions, but, like a cheerful giver, divided all that he had among his fellow-beings. He gave largely towards the erection of churches, and the poor received rich alms; he frequently paid the ransom of enslaved pagans, for the love of Christ, in order to lead them to the true faith, and that mercy which he expected from God he showed to all.

The Saint had once ransomed a pagan slave, and instructed him in the true faith. After having been baptized, he received his freedom from Botwid, who also assisted him to return to his native country. Botwid said: "You have now your freedom, and can return to your pagan country; be careful then, my son, not to lose your faith, which you have promised our God and Saviour Jesus Christ to preserve. Instruct your parents and relatives in your holy faith, and in loving the Saviour, so that you may all one day obtain His mercy." When spring had come, and vessels could sail, Botwid desired to send his pupil home; for this end he took him and another of his peasants, named Hesbern, in a boat, and they searched about in the different bays and islands for the purpose of finding a ship that was bound for Gothland. They landed quite late one evening upon a deserted island, and were obliged to remain there for the night. Botwid, as usual, said his prayers, and then fell asleep under a tree, as he was very much fatigued. Hesbern also had fallen asleep near the boat. The freed man was a terrible wretch; he had only feigned Christianity, but in his heart he served the devil. He moved slowly towards Botwid, took up the axe, and split open the head of the sleeping Saint; he then went to Hesbern, and did the same. After this crime he took the money and the provisions which Botwid had provided himself with, went into the boat, and rowed away.

We often hear bitter complaints concerning ingratitude, and that it is useless to be charitable. No one could experience greater ingratitute than did St. Botwid; but what injury did he receive by it? He gained the reward and the glory of a martyr, which he otherwise would not have received. If you do good from pure love to God and man, like Botwid, and you receive ingratitude in return, it will be a sin and a great loss to those who are ungrateful, but it will be your gain; for if man is not thankful to you, God will reward you the more for all that you have done.

The parents and relatives of St. Botwid became very anxious at his long absence; they finally consulted a pious priest, named Henry, as to what they should do; he told them to pray earnestly to God that the lost one might be found, living or dead. After finishing their prayer, they procured a boat, and

commenced searching for St. Botwid; they, however, knew not in what direction to sail, when suddenly a little white bird alighted on the boat, singing most beautifully. As they were sailing by the island where the Saint had been murdered, the bird flew away from the boat, and perched upon the tree under which Botwid was buried. This caused them to disembark, and they found the body of the Saint, which they piously conveyed to his home. A church, dedicated to him, was afterwards erected over his grave.

ST. LUPUS.

(July 29.)

"Celibacy"

This Saint was descended from a noble family in Lorraine, and when very young, lost his father. His uncle then took care of him, and had him well educated. Lupus possessed great talent, and as a lawyer soon became celebrated for his eloquence. He married Pimeniola, a sister of St. Hilary of Arles, who was distinguished for her noble and excellent qualities. After living seven years together, their desire to attain Christian perfection became so strong that they resolved to leave the world. They, therefore, separated by mutual consent, and made the vow of continency. St. Lupus left his father's house, unloosed the fetters that had bound him to the world, and in order to serve God, went to the abbey of Lerins, where St. Honoratus was Abbot. For one year he practiced all the austerities of the order, so that he was held up as a model to the other monks.

Possessing an estate at Macon, in Burgundy, Lupus went there to sell it, and apply the proceeds to good works. While he was transacting his business he was elected Bishop of Troyes, which office he was forced to accept.

At that time the Pelagian heresy was spreading fast in England, and the Catholics of that country applied to the Bishops of France for assistance, to check the destruction of the Catholic religion. The Bishops held a council, in which they resolved to send St. Germain and St. Lupus to England. The two Bishops, burning with zeal for the honor of Christ, accepted this commission with special joy, because it was attended with great trouble and labor. They found nearly the whole of England infected with the poison of this false doctrine, which denied original sin, and declared grace superfluous; the holy Bishops, however, by their prayer, preaching, and miracles,

which God worked through them, effected that the Catholic faith was everywhere restored again.

The leaders of the heresy, seeing that their followers were deserting them, made a desperate attempt to recover their former authority. They challenged the two Bishops to a public discussion, and great crowds assembled to listen to the controversy. The holy Bishops allowed their opponents to speak first. Lupus and Germain then clearly and powerfully refuted the false doctrine. The people applauded the truth with loud acclamations, and almost laid hands upon the heretics; but at once an officer of distinction and his wife made their appearance with their blind daughter, who was ten years old, and took her to the holy men in the hope, and with the prayer, that they would restore her sight. The holy Bishops bade them take the child to the heretics, in order that it might be seen whether God was with them or not; but even the heretics had lost confidence in themselves and in their doctrine, and united their petition with that of the parents of the blind girl that Lupus and Germain would restore her sight. Then the holy Bishops said a short prayer, and St. Germain touched the girl's eyes with a relic which he always carried with him, and in a moment she received her sight. The parents rejoiced, and the people all with great fervor embraced the Catholic faith.

After Lupus had returned to his diocese, he continued to preach to the people as he had always done; he directed the clergy with such wisdom and firmness that a great many Saints were found among them. He did not allow those who had received minor orders to marry, and although at that time (400 A. D.) it was very difficult to find men who were worthy of the priesthood, if those who were married had been excluded from it, Lupus, nevertheless, refused to ordain any married man. His revenues he used for the benefit of the poor, and for the ransoming of captives; he ate but once every two or three days, and on Saturday he ate nothing but rye-bread; he rose at midnight, and sang the psalms, and every second night he spent in prayer; and for twenty years he slept upon a bare plank.

The Huns, who had devastated the country, and destroyed many cities, were marching with an enormous army upon Troyes, and terrible confusion reigned among the inhabitants, when one single man, St. Lupus, was the means of restoring order. For several days he offered up to God continued prayers, tears, fastings, and other good works; he then met the king of the Huns, the scourge of God, as he called himself.

His fame and person made such an impression upon Attila, that he retired with his army of half a million of men without disturbing the city in the least. Attila then marched against the approaching army of the Romans, but lost the battle, and retreated towards the river Rhine. In his misfortune he thought of St. Lupus, and sent a messenger to bring him to his retreat. His reason for doing so was that the saintly Bishop might accompany him as a protector; and

when he had reached the Rhine, Attila dismissed the servant of God, asking him even to pray for him. Other heathen kings were also filled with veneration for St. Lupus. Thus, for instance, the king of the Allemani, in an expedition which he had made into the diocese of Troyes, had taken many prisoners. St. Lupus interested himself in their behalf, and went in person to visit the king, who at once gave them their freedom, and sent them back to their country without demanding any ransom.

St. Lupus reached a great age, and was fifty-two years Bishop of Troyes. After his holy death, the church in which he was interred received his name, and several churches in England also regard St. Lupus as their patron.

Dear reader, do you think that St. Lupus would have become a venerable and holy Bishop, or that Attila, one of the most formidable kings that ever lived, would have heeded his advice if he had remained a married man? Certainly not. It is, therefore, the law of the Roman Church that the priests shall remain unmarried. To the priests are applicable the words of Christ: "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." (John 20 : 21.) The priest unites himself daily in the holy sacrifice of the Mass with the Most Holy, and, therefore, should become with Christ but ONE person, and continue what Christ has commenced.

Is it becoming for such a man to have a wife? The priest with all his thoughts, love, care, and zeal, should belong to his congregation alone—the whole congregation is his family. A married man does not wish to visit those who are afflicted with contagious diseases, for he would then bring pestilence into his own family; no one desires to make his confession to a married man, for he fears that he might repeat what had been said to him; the married man cannot be a father to the poor, for he is obliged to take care of his own wife and children; the married man cannot preach the Gospel of truth without restraint, because it might be said that his wife had influenced him; and it is difficult for the married man to appear fearless against the world, and not submit to it, because he must take into consideration that he has a wife and children to support. *It is, therefore, a wise and holy provision that the priest must live in the state of celibacy.*

ST. JULITTA.

(July 30.)

"Spirit of Sacrifice."

When the priest elevates the body and blood of Christ, the Christian should return love for love, and sacrifice for sacrifice. He should say: "Jesus, for Thee I live; Jesus, for Thee I die; Jesus, I am Thine in life and in death!"

That great Doctor of the Church, St. Basil the Great, himself preached the panegyric on St. Julitta, which we will give in full: "Beloved, we assemble to-day in this temple to celebrate the festival of the martyr, St. Julitta; for we have announced this day to you as a feast, to be solemnly celebrated in commemoration of the great and glorious combat which the blessed woman Julitta, to the astonishment and terror of all who saw her, has fought with a weak body, but with a courageous soul, if SHE can be called a woman who, by her heroic actions, overcame the weakness of female nature; for I believe in truth that our common adversary—Satan—was conquered by her, and it must be insupportable for him to be deprived of the palm of victory by women. He who is accustomed in his arrogance to boast that he can destroy the whole earth, and turn cities into deserts, he has been confounded by the virtue of this glorious woman. He found her, whom he incited to forsake Christ by trying to make her think that God would not protect and preserve her, stronger than might have been expected from her nature; she despised and scoffed at the means used by the enemy to intimidate her.

"She had summoned before the tribunal one of the principal men of the city, who had taken forcible possession of the greater part of her estates, fields, houses, cattle, and slaves, and who, after taking away her furniture, had secured himself against any further trouble by obtaining false witnesses, and at the same time by bribing the judges. When the day of the trial had arrived, and the judges and lawyers had commenced the case, Julitta related to the judges the ruthless violence of her persecutor, and she was able to prove by documents that she had for a long time been in lawful possession of her estates. After she had made a plain statement of the facts, the accused came forward, and declared that, according to law, Julitta could not bring a charge against any one; that those who refused to worship the gods, should not be on an equality with others, unless they would first deny their belief in Christ. The judge was pleased with this objection, and thought it in accordance with the existing law. He at once commanded incense and coal to be brought, and then told Julitta that if she wished to claim the protection of the law she should deny Christ; but if she persevered in her belief, then the law could not protect her; for, according to the decree of the emperor, all who refused to sacrifice to the gods were proscribed.

"But what did she now do? Was she overcome by the desire to retain her

riches? Did she resign her claims upon heaven for the sake of obtaining the protection of the law? Was she confounded and frightened at heart by the dangers which threatened her? No; but what does she say? 'All my temporal goods, and even my life may perish, before I will utter one wicked word against God, my Creator!' When she saw that the judges were enraged at her words, she offered up thanks to God that while seeking protection against the robber of her temporal goods, the possession of the eternal goods would fall to her share, for she saw how EARTH was taken from her in order that she might possess HEAVEN; how she was delivered up to ignominy, so that she might be made worthy of the crown of glory; how her body was to be scourged, and she deprived of this temporal life, that she might participate in the blessed hope of being added to the choirs of all the Saints in the enjoyment of the heavenly kingdom.

"Many questions were put to her, but she answered them all by declaring that she was a handmaid of the Lord, and she turned away with abhorrence from those who wished her to deny her faith. The wicked judge not only deprived her of her large estates, contrary to all law and justice, but he also announced to her that her life was to be taken from her, and condemned her to be burned alive. She never ran so joyously after the pleasures of life, as she did after the flames prepared for her; her face, demeanor, words, and cheerfulness revealed the joy she experienced in being called upon to die for Christ.

"Julitta conjured the women, standing near her, not to spare any trouble, in order to preserve the Christian religion, and that they should not allege as a pretext for renouncing their faith the weakness of the sex; 'for,' said she, 'women are formed of the same substance as men; we are all created after the image of God; a woman is destined by Almighty God to be virtuous as well as a man; are we not equal to all men in all things? for to form a woman not only was flesh taken, but also bone from bone; for this reason we not less than men should have firmness and perseverance, and should have patience in adversity.

"After having spoken these words, she jumped upon the burning pyre, whose flames received her body, but sent her soul to that heavenly place, and to that quiet which her merits deserved. Her venerable body, however, remained unhurt, and is now a holy relic in the magnificent temple in which it was deposited, and it incites all pilgrims to more fervent piety.

"Upon the place of martyrdom water sprung up from the earth, which water possesses very precious qualities; it is a means of preservation to the healthy, a pleasure to those who drink it, and a medicine to the sick. The Saint has done for us what Elias did for the inhabitants of Jericho, by rendering salt water, unfit to drink, sweet and pleasant to the taste.

"Men, I beseech you, be not found weaker in adhering to your religion than women; women, be encouraged by the example I have set before you, to persevere in the path of virtue, and prove in word and deed that the weakness of your sex is no obstacle to the accomplishing of every good work."

BLESSED JOHN COLUMBINI.

(July 31.)

"Reading the Lives of the Saints."

On this day the feast of a great Saint is celebrated, that of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus; we however, will relate the life of another Saint, for the reason that the life of St. Ignatius is so rich in events and works that it is impossible to do justice to it in our limited space; but we advise our readers to read a complete biography of this wonderful Saint.

St. Columbini's conversion, however, happened as follows: "He was a merchant, belonging to a noble family of Siena, at that time (1300) a free city, and therefore devoted himself to study. When quite young, he had married Blasia, a beautiful and virtuous daughter of a rich and noble family. After several years their marriage was blessed with two children, a boy and a girl; but the parents' joy was soon turned into sorrow, for both children died.

"Although one of the magistrates of the city, in his thirst for riches he did not scruple to take what did not belong to him, and the members of his family saw with regret that he became every day more and more engaged in the pursuits of the perishable goods of this world.

"One day Columbini returned home sooner than usual, and wished to have his dinner, as he was very hungry; the dinner, however, was not quite ready, and he angrily scolded his wife and the servants, and, although they were as expeditious as possible in their movements, the delay excited his wrath to such a degree that the whole house resounded with his curses. His wife begged him to wait a little while, and to read the lives of the Saints, in order to pass the time until dinner was ready; but he, in a passion, snatched the book from her, and threw it upon the floor, with words unbecoming a Christian. Blasia, in order not to increase his fury, retired without saying a word. The anger of Columbini gradually subsided, and, ashamed of the manner in which he had acted, he picked up the book from the floor, opened it, and commenced to read. It was the life of St. Mary of Egypt, in which was related the wonderful conversion and penance of her who had been a very wicked sinner, but who, after forty-five years of penance in the desert, became such a pure soul that she was found worthy to converse with the Angels and the Lord of the Angels, and to hear heavenly music. John was delighted with what he read, his anger abated, and his impatience was changed into pious meditation. He would first pause in reading, and be filled with admiration, and then he would fix his eyes upon the book; another hunger was now awakened in him, and he refreshed his soul with wholesome food; the desire of imitating her sprung up in his soul, and he finally resolved to change his life. Meanwhile the industrious wife appeared and announced that the meal was ready; but John answered: 'Wait a moment, and have

a little patience until I have finished reading what I have commenced.' 'Most willingly,' replied the wife, 'we will keep your dinner warm.' Filled with astonishment, she rejoiced at the change in her husband, and going into an adjoining chamber, fell upon her knees, and gave thanks to the Almighty, and begged him to accomplish the good work that He had begun, to open the eyes of the blind, to take his mind from the lust of riches, and to create in his heart a desire to fulfill the divine commandments. Her prayer was not without effect; John Columbini became another and a better man; a spark had fallen from above into his cold heart which at first burned slowly, but which eventually became so great a fire as to consume whatever was displeasing to God in his character. He quenched his thirst for money; all the time he could spare from business, he spent in prayer; he was kind and merciful to the poor, gave rich alms, visited the churches, and showed many other signs of an amended life. Blasia besought the Lord day and night to make the change lasting, and she endeavored in every way to strengthen her husband in his resolutions by her pious admonitions.

"The new spirit, now ruling in the heart of Columbini, was in direct opposition to that which formerly governed him; he made careful inquiries as to whom he had cheated, in order to make ample restitution; he gave better measure, and sold lower than the usual price, for which reason he obtained many customers. All were astonished, because he was known to have been a greedy man, and not at all inclined to be charitable; some were of the opinion that friends had represented to him that his avârice would bring disgrace upon his family; others considered the change in his character as a sure sign of his being crazy; only a few saw that it was the beginning of a holy life.

"His good works were not, however, sufficient for him; with the consent of his wife he made the vow of continency, and prepared to give up his business, and to divide whatever he had among the poor. After a while, however, he became sick, and his only thought was of his own unworthiness to be so carefully nursed at home in his soft bed, when his Lord had not even whereupon to lay his head, and had no one to console Him while hanging on the cross. He, therefore, during the night, when all were asleep, left the house, and searched for the poorest hospital in the city; he asked to be received, and as he was not known to the attendants, was treated like any other poor man. After some days, however, his relatives found out his abode, and against his will brought him back to his house.

"The holy man was now tempted by one from whom he least expected it, for his really pious wife thought his penitential life exaggerated.

"Eight years after this, miracles were added to the increasing sanctity of John; thus, for instance, one night, when praying, his whole body was seen brilliantly shining. A leper whom he had carried into his house, and put into his bed (although reproached by Blasia for doing so,) had, after filling the whole

room with an odor of supernatural sweetness, disappeared, and could never again be found. Blasia then knew that she had resisted the Holy Ghost who had inspired her husband, and, filled with sorrow, she told him that she would consent to whatever the spirit of God might demand of him. Deeming himself now entirely free, he provided for the support of his wife, gave the rest of his property to religious objects, and desired to live in perfect poverty, eating only the bread he received as alms. It was, indeed, a wonderful sight for the whole city of Siena to see the man, who as a magistrate had formerly appeared richly dressed, and accompanied by noble persons and high officials, was everywhere honored and saluted, now walking barefooted, dressed in old rags, asking for a piece of bread from house to house. In order to humble himself even more, he visited the palace belonging to the government, in which he himself had once lived as an honorable magistrate, and where public dinners had been given him, and begged the steward to engage him as a servant; and as soon as his petition was accepted, he swept the floor, carried wood, and did other menial tasks. He thus worked for two months, never eating what had been cooked in the kitchen, but preferring what he had obtained by begging.

"Urged on by his love for God, Columbini could not refrain from preaching in the public places, earnestly exhorting the people to turn from sin and the world to God alone. His words and example had such effect that many did penance for their sins, while others joined him in following the Saviour. Many youths and men of noble families adopted his mode of life, on account of which their relatives induced the magistrate to expel Columbini from the city.

"After Columbini had been exiled from his native city, a terrible storm arose, accompanied by hail and heavy rain, and when the storm had subsided, a pestilence broke out, not a house escaping its attacks. The people regarded this visitation as a punishment from heaven for having so unjustly expelled the servant of God, and the magistrate at once sent a deputation to Aretino, whither Columbini had gone, asking his forgiveness, and inviting him to return.

"The conversions effected by Blessed Columbini were often very wonderful. Traveling once on his Apostolic mission, he met a peasant who was plowing. Columbini stopped for a moment, and looking at him, said: 'Come, and follow me.' The peasant left the plow and the oxen, and became a true follower of his new master, so that he obtained great perfection.

"Seeing the number of his followers daily increasing, Columbini applied for, and obtained the approbation of Pope Urban IV. for his society, the principal object of which was to lead a life of penance, and to nurse the sick. When Columbini and his companions came to Viterbo, crying out, 'Vivat Jesus Christus!' the children running after them would call them 'THE JESUATI,' which name they kept. Columbini died soon after obtaining the approbation of his society, and Almighty God testified by many miracles how pleasing this holy man had been to Him, the MOST HIGH.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

PENTECOST-CYCLE CONTINUED.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—PS. 53.

"BEHOLD, God is my helper, and the Lord is the protector of my soul; turn back the evils upon my enemies, and cut them off in thy truth, O Lord, my protector. Save me, O God, by thy name, and deliver me in thy strength." Glory be to the Father.

As the Church on the first eight Sundays after Pentecost in the liturgical parts of the Mass has proposed to us in general the regeneration and sanctification of the faithful through the Holy Ghost, and their entrance into the Church, in the same manner does she present them to us on the four following Sundays as united with the Christian Church. The sanctification and salvation of all men, as members of the great community of the sacred body of Christ, is the will of God, and He gives them the necessary means to attain this sublime end. He sometimes uses earnest and threatening, at other times mild and conciliatory means, to incite the faithful to good works, and to warn them against evil; in all His decrees, however, does He show His paternal kindness and mercy towards His own.

According to this meaning, therefore, the Introit of the Mass contains the prayer of a faithful servant of God, in which, making use of the words of the pious king of Israel, he implores the powerful and kind protection of the Lord against the enemies of his salvation, in order to be freed from eternal perdition.

PRAYER.

Let the ears of Thy mercy, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Thy suppliants, and that Thou mayest grant what Thy petitioners desire, make them ask those things which are pleasing to Thee. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—1 Cor. 10 : 6—13.

"Brethren: We should not covet evil things, as they also coveted. Neither become ye idolaters, as some of them: as it is written: 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.' Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed fornication, and there fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ: as some of them tempted, and perished by the serpents. Neither do you murmur: as some of them murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them in figure: and they are written for our correction, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall. Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."

St. Paul, in order to warn the faithful against sin, and to incite them to lead a pure and holy life, brings before us the sad example of the Israelites, who, during their stay in the desert, sinned in manifold manner, especially by committing the sins of idolatry, gluttony, and impurity, and by being dissatisfied and murmuring against the precepts of the Lord, on account of which they were terribly punished. The Apostle then warns the faithful against self-confidence, and against the dangers of trusting too much in their own strength, and in their own firmness. He says: "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed, lest he fall," that is, no one can say with certainty, that he is confirmed in the grace of God, that he is pleasing to the Lord, or that he possesses in himself such firmness and judgment that he could not be overcome by any temptation; to have such confidence is presumption; but, continues the Apostle, should the faithful be tempted to commit sin, (and who is safe from it?) they should not allow themselves to be conquered by any temptation, "but by such as is human." "It is devilish," remarks St. Anselm, "to be conquered by temptation, and to sin out of malice; it is angelic not to have any temptations; it is human to have temptations, and to conquer them." At the same time St. Paul consoles the faithful by giving them the assurance that God will not suffer them to be tempted above their strength, and that He will assist them with His grace, so that they may be able to overcome all, even the greatest temptation.

GOSPEL.—Luke 19 : 41–47.

"At that time: When Jesus drew near Jerusalem, seeing the city, he wept

over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. And entering into the temple, he began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought, saying to them: It is written: 'My house is the house of prayer;' but you have made it a den of thieves. And he was teaching daily in the temple."

In the Gospel of to-day, the blindness of the Israelites in the time of Christ is regarded as precisely similar to the malice of this people in the time of Moses, and their conduct is proposed to us as a warning. At His last solemn entrance into Jerusalem, shortly before His Passion, our Saviour with tears of bitter grief deplores the terrible judgment which the inhabitants of that city would call down upon themselves by their infidelity, and obdurate resistance to grace. Great, indeed, must have been the calamity which could draw tears from the eyes of the Immortal God.

It was nothing less than the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and the rejection by God of His chosen people.

The prophecy of Christ was fulfilled in thirty-seven years. About that time Titus, who afterwards became Roman emperor, commenced on the very spot where Christ made the prophecy, to "cast trenches about the city, and compass it around," and, after a terrible siege, the city and temple were razed to the ground, and the inhabitants slain or scattered throughout the world.

In reference to the prophecy concerning Jerusalem, St. Gregory the Great says: "It is known to all that our Lord foretold the destruction which was accomplished under the Roman Generals Titus and Vespasian; for they it was of whom it was said: 'The days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee.' The following words: 'And they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone,' also indicate the destruction of the city; for as the present city of Jerusalem is built upon the same spot where our Saviour was crucified, which was situated outside of the walls, the first Jerusalem is, according to the prophecy of Christ, entirely destroyed. The reason for which the city was to be destroyed, is given in the following words: 'Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.' Our Redeemer wept over the destruction of a faithless city before the inhabitants knew that such a calamity would befall them."

The words of our Lord are applicable also to every human soul entangled in the snares of sin, unmindful of the graces it has received, and thus allowing the time of visitation to pass by; and with this meaning the Church proposes to us

the Gospel of to-day. St. Gregory says: "The words of Christ are daily repeated by His servants when He sees any one becoming wicked who had formerly led a good and virtuous life; for every wicked soul, enjoying itself in this perishable world, will have its day of visitation; for while it enjoys itself in possessing temporal goods, while it raises itself to honors, while it becomes weak by indulging in sensuality, while it fears not the punishment that awaits it, it has peace in this its day; but when the day of visitation has passed, it will receive eternal punishment, for then that soul will lament when the just rejoice, and all that has been to its peace will be changed into bitter strife, for it will then commence to war with itself, because it has not feared the eternal damnation which now it has to suffer; because its eyes had been closed to the threatening evil which it might have foreseen; for the wicked soul, given up to the things that are, and entangled in the pleasures of this world, hides from itself the approaching evils because it is afraid to meditate upon THE THINGS THAT WILL BE; which thought would destroy its present enjoyments; for in giving itself up to the amusements of the present life, what else does it do but run with closed eyes into the fire? It is, therefore, very justly said: 'In the day of good things be not unmindful of evil;' (Ecclus. 11 : 27) and the Apostle says: 'They who rejoice (should be) as they who are not rejoicing,' (1 Cor. 7 : 30) because the joys of this world (if there are any true joys) should be used in such a manner that the bitterness of the coming judgment should never be absent from our mind; for if the anxious soul is penetrated with fear of the last judgment, the approaching wrath of God will be allayed in the same proportion as present enjoyments are moderated."

When Jesus at His last entrance into Jerusalem came with His disciples into the temple, He witnessed, according to the Gospel, the same desecration of the holy place which He had discovered and severely punished in the commencement of His public life, when coming to Jerusalem at the time of Easter, He found money-changers, buyers, and sellers at the entrance of the temple, which entrance or porch was open not only to the Jews, but also to all the nations of the earth, for which reason it was called the PORCH OF THE GENTILES. As before, so did He now become angry at their unholy transactions, and He again gave to the assembled multitude a strong proof of His just indignation regarding the desecration of the holy place dedicated to the worship of Almighty God, and at the same time an evidence of His omnipotence, for He cast out all those that sold therein, and those that bought, reproaching them in earnest and well-merited terms of censure.

This event contains an earnest admonition to avoid the example of these persons who desecrated the temple of God. We should conduct ourselves respectfully in the house of God; for if those were deemed worthy of punishment who desecrated only the entrance of the Jewish temple by actions which were not in themselves unlawful, and only became wicked, because the trans-

actions were carried on in the wrong place, how much more are those CHRISTIANS, who desecrate THE SANCTITY OF THEIR CHURCH, which is more sublime and more holy than was even the Holy of Holies of the Jewish temple! St. Augustine says: "The Jewish temple was only a figure of our Church, and yet our Lord cast out all those who bought and sold. And what was sold there? What the Jews used for their sacrifices, such as oxen, sheep, and pigeons. It was, therefore, not a great crime to sell in the temple what would ultimately be offered up in the temple, for whatever is lawful to buy is also lawful to sell; and notwithstanding Christ cast them all out. What would the Lord have done if He had found drunkards and other criminals there?" In the same sense venerable Bede says: "Every one believed that it was lawful to sell in the temple what was to be offered up to the Lord in the same temple; but the Lord Himself, who did not wish to have worldly affairs transacted in His house, although permitted in other places, cast out the unlawful merchants, and all those who bought from them. What would our Lord do, my brethren, if He found in His holy Church men quarreling, talking or laughing with one another, or commiting any other improper act, since He cast out those who bought in the temple things that were to be offered up to Him.'

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 54.

"When I cried unto the Lord, he heard my voice from them that draw near to me, and he humbled them, who is before all ages, and remains forever. Cast thy care upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. Hear, O God, my prayer, and despise not my supplications; be attentive to me, and hear me." Glory be to the Father.

In these words of the holy Prophet, the Church calls upon us to humble ourselves before God in all our necessities, and to unite with this humility firm confidence in His mercy, since the Lord lends a willing ear to those who invoke Him with humble and trusting hearts.

PRAYER.

O God, who dost particularly manifest Thy omnipotence by sparing and showing mercy, multiply Thy mercy towards us, that running to the possession

of what Thou hast promised, Thou mayest make us partakers of heavenly goods. Through Christ, our Lord.

EPISTLE.—1 Corinthians, 12 : 2–11.

"Brethren: You know that when you were heathens, you went to dumb idols, according as you were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the spirit of God, saith Anathema to Jesus. And no man can say, The Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit: and there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. To one, indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom: to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another, faith in the same Spirit: to another, the grace of healing, in one Spirit: to another, the working of miracles: to another, prophecy: to another, the discerning of spirits: to another, divers kinds of tongues: to another, interpretation of speeches: but all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as he will."

The Apostle, in these words of the Epistle, calls the attention of the faithful to the sublime effects of the Holy Ghost, in contrast to the sad darkness in which they lived when heathens. The mark by which the faithful Christian, filled with the spirit of God, is distinguished from the infidel, is, according to the Apostle, the invocation of the most holy name of Jesus, a name always blasphemed by the enemies of Christianity.

The Apostle then explains how the same Holy Spirit produces different effects in the faithful, according to the diversities of ministries to which the Lord God has called each one of the faithful; no one should, therefore, despise those who have not received the best gift of the Holy Ghost, nor should any one pride himself, in a spirit of vain glory, on account of the graces he has received, as though he possessed them of himself, since no one can without the operation of the Holy Ghost possess the true faith, or even invoke aright the holy name of Jesus; every one, therefore, should rather use the graces he receives for the advantage of the whole Church, and his own salvation.

GOSPEL.—Luke 18 : 9–14.

"At that time: To some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others, Jesus spoke this parable: Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself: O God! I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican. I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, wo

not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven; but struck his breast, saying: O God! be merciful to me a sinner! I say to you, this man went down into his house justified rather than the other; because every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."

In the Gospel of to-day we are expressly warned against pride and self-esteem, and are admonished humbly to acknowledge our unworthiness before Almighty God. Our Saviour, to convince us of this, gives the example of two men, each of whom offers up prayers according to his own manner; these two occupied very different positions in society, the one was a PHARISEE, the other a PUBLICAN. The pharisee, although outwardly a man without reproach, avoiding great sins, and practicing good works, even those not prescribed by the law, is not sincere in his prayers, and, therefore, not heard, because his prayers were void of humility, the first and most necessary requisite; but, filled with pride and self-complacency, he exalted himself on account of his good works, considered himself better than his fellow-men, and looked down upon others with insolence and contempt. The publican, however, belonging to the wicked class, and not free from sin, represents to us a man whose prayer is pleasing to God, and who, therefore, found grace, because, acknowledging his guilt, he humbled himself, and, with a sorrowful and contrite heart, asked for pardon and mercy. St. Basil justly remarks: "The pharisee lost by his pride justification; he lost his reward by too great self-confidence; for his insolence he was rejected, in opposition to the humble sinner, because exalting himself, he waited not for the judgment of God, but. filled with self-conceit, he judged himself."

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 67.

"God, in his holy place; God, who maketh men of one mind to dwell in a house, he shall give power and strength to his people. Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; and let them that hate him flee before his face." Glory be to the Father.

IN the above Introit, the Church implores God, according to the spirit of the royal Prophet, with firm confidence for His divine assistance for the salvation of the faithful, and for victory over all her enemies.

PRAYER.

O Almighty and everlasting God, who by the abundance of Thy mercy dost exceed the desires and deserts of Thy suppliants, pour forth Thy mercy upon us, that Thou mayest forgive what our conscience fears, and grant what our prayer does not presume to ask. Through Jesus Christ.

EPISTLE.—1 Cor. 15 : 1–10.

"Brethren: I make known unto you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand: by which also you are saved, if you hold fast after what manner I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all, which I also received: how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he arose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. Then was he seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen by James, then by all the Apostles. And last of all, he was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am; and his grace in me hath not been void."

St. Paul, in the above passage, again reminds the Christians of Corinth of the fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith concerning the resurrection of the Lord, which by His repeated apparitions before the eyes of His disciples He had irrefutably corroborated, and which, therefore, was to be considered as one of the surest and most glorious proofs of the divinity of Christ, and of the truth of His doctrine. The Apostle further remarks how the Lord appeared to him also when on his journey to Damascus he had been converted, and he profits at the same time by the occasion to express his humility, because, notwithstanding the abundant graces which the Saviour by His extraordinary vocation had bestowed upon him, he calls himself one born out of due time, for the reason that his vocation to the Apostleship happened in a time when he, as a violent persecutor of the Catholic Church, was least expected to be converted; he even declares himself to be unworthy of the name of an Apostle, because he had, when surrounded by the false prejudices of Judaism, persecuted the Church. And whatever great things he had accomplished in honor of the holy name of Jesus, and for the spreading of the Gospel, he humbly ascribed not to himself, but to the grace of God, which had not been wanting in him. "It is a great and rare virtue," justly remarks St. Bernard in reference to the above, "when performing great things, to be unconscious of your greatness, and when your holiness, known to all, is concealed to yourself, to be admired by others, and to despise yourself; I consider this more worthy of admiration than the virtues themselves.

You are indeed a faithful servant, if of the honor of your master nothing remains in your hands, and although it proceeded not from you, nevertheless it penetrates your whole being. You will, therefore, be entitled to hear the words: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.' (Matt. 25 : 21.)"

GOSPEL.—Mark 7 : 31–37.

"At that time: Jesus going out of the coasts of Tyre, came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. And they bring to him one deaf and dumb; and they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him. And taking him from the multitude apart, he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue: and looking up to heaven, he groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And he charged them that they should tell no man. But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it. And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well; he hath made the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

Pope Gregory the Great says: "Why was it that the Lord, the Creator of all things, in wishing to heal the deaf and dumb, put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, touched his tongue? By the fingers of the Saviour are indicated *the gifts of the Holy Ghost.* He, therefore, says in another passage, after having cast out a devil: '*If I, by the finger of God, cast out devils, doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you.*' (Luke 11 : 20.) And in the same manner He says, according to another Evangelist: '*If I, by the Spirit of God, cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come unto you.*' (Matt. 12 : 28.) From these two passages of the holy Scripture it is evident that *the finger of God* signifies *the Spirit of God.* The putting of the fingers into the ears signifies, therefore, how by the gift of the Holy Ghost the mind of the deaf and dumb, was opened to a willing hearing. And why did he, spitting, touch his tongue? The spitting of the Saviour indicates to us the heavenly wisdom obtained by the divine word. If the wisdom, therefore, which He is Himself, is touched with our tongue, it (our tongue) is immediately formed to proclaim the word. Looking up to heaven He groaned, not as though it were necessary for Him to groan, because He could easily obtain that for which He asked (from His heavenly Father), but He groaned in order to teach us that we should let our groans ascend to Him, who is in heaven begging that our ears may be opened through the grace of the Holy Ghost, and that the string of our tongue may be loosed by the spittle of His mouth, that is through the knowledge of the divine doctrine, to proclaim the word. He then said to the deaf and dumb: 'Be thou opened!'

And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed. It is to be remarked that our Saviour said on account of the closed ears: 'Be thou opened.' For the tongue of him whose ears are open to obedience is immediately loosed, so that he can exhort others also to perform good works which he himself accomplishes. It is, therefore, justly added, 'And he spoke right;' for He speaks right, who by obedience first practices that which he admonishes others to do."

The outward ceremonies used by Christ on these occasions, are also a figure, and the best justification of the manifold outward ceremonies used by the Church in administering the holy Sacraments, and at other divine services; which ceremonies, however, as those used by Christ in healing the deaf and dumb, are in themselves not essential and necessary, but are like those of the Saviour, appropriate, and not without signification, and are, therefore, very unjustly censured by the opponents of the Catholic Church, who do not value them, because they do not understand the meaning and true signification of them. Our holy Church, therefore, very justly uses the same ceremony which our Saviour used in healing the deaf and dumb, that is touching with spittle, and pronouncing the word Ephpheta—be thou opened, in administering the holy Sacrament of Baptism; at the same time, according to the interpretation of the Holy Fathers, the deaf and dumb healed by our Saviour, is a true figure of mankind in their original state of sin, which is naturally deaf to listen to the divine teachings; and dumb, to acknowledge its misery, and to proclaim the praises of God; but by holy baptism it has been healed from these spiritual infirmities, and is made capable of listening to the divine teachings, and to proclaim the praises of God.

The Church proposes the Gospel also to teach us that we, who have been deaf and dumb in spirit through our sins, may now, cured by the grace of God from these spiritual infirmities, willingly attend, as true members of our holy Church, to the divine teachings, sincerely confess our sins in the tribunal of penance, elevate our hearts in devout prayer, and speak always and everywhere for the honor of God, our own salvation, and for the welfare of our neighbor.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—PS. 69.

"INCLINE to my aid, O God; O Lord, make haste to help me; let my enemies be confounded and ashamed who seek my soul. Let them be turned backwards, and blush for shame, who desire evils to me." Glory be to the Father.

The Church, in these words of the royal Prophet, again exhorts the faithful to implore with devotion and confidence the assistance and protection of God against the enemies of their salvation, in order to obtain with greater certainty their sublime object in the kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER.

O Almighty and merciful God, from whose gift it comes that Thou art worthily and laudably served by the faithful, grant us, we beseech Thee, to run without offence to the attainment of Thy promises. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—2 Cor. 3 : 4–9.

"Brethren: Such confidence we have, through Christ towards God. Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God. Who also hath made us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter, but in the Spirit. For the letter killeth: but the Spirit quickeneth. Now if the ministration of death, engraven with letters upon stones, was glorious; so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which is made void: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather in glory? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory; much more the ministration of justice aboundeth in glory."

St. Paul, in this Epistle as in those of the two preceding Sundays, instructs us on the virtue of humility; for this Apostle confesses that the powerful and beneficial efficacy of the sublime ministry of the New Testament proceeds from and depends on the sufficiency, "which is from God." The Apostle calls our attention to the great truth which our Saviour expresses in His last beautiful discourse, that without grace we are like a fruitless branch severed from the vine. St. Bernard says: "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God. When we, therefore, think evil in our heart, it is our thought; but it is the word of God if we think that which is good; the former our heart speaks, the latter it hears. It is written: "I will hear what the Lord will speak in me; for He will speak peace unto His people." (Ps. 84 : 9.) God, therefore, speaks in us peace, justice, and piety, and this we think not as of ourselves, but we hear within us; murders, on the contrary, adulteries, thefts, blasphemies, and other crimes proceeding from the heart, we hear not, but speak.

The Apostle then points to the superiority of the new over the old law. This, with its many ceremonies and outward precepts, a mere type of the new, and, therefore, powerless to save man, he calls a mere letter, because its precepts and usages were only literally understood; the new law, on the contrary, he calls the SPIRIT, because it possesses not only real and sanctifying power, with outward ceremonies, but it possesses also the means of salvation for the inward

change of the spirit. The old law, the letter, killeth, that is it does not free man from the guilt of sin; it points out the sin, but provides no means by which to avoid it, nor has it the power to resist it, and in such manner causes, as it were, death. The New Testament, the law of grace, not only shows man how to avoid sin, but gives him the means by which he can be cleansed from it, so that, rescued from death, he can live forever.

The expression of the Apostle: "The letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth," refers also to reading and explaining the Bible, because in many passages we cannot adhere to the literal sense, but we must look to the spirit, the true meaning of the words, and their connection with one another, in order not to err. Whoever, therefore, presumes to interpret the holy Scriptures according to his own narrow understanding, will certainly fall into error; for there are passages in the holy Scriptures which, taken according to the letter, give rise to wrong opinions; there are even many passages which seem to contradict each other, and may consequently mislead the inexperienced reader. Every one, therefore, must adhere to the authentic interpretation of the holy Scriptures which the Holy Fathers, men enlightened by the spirit of God, have made with unsurpassable wisdom, and which our holy Church has sanctioned. By reading the holy Scriptures in this manner, they will be a source of instruction and salvation to all.

GOSPEL.—Luke 10 : 23-37.

"At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them. And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself." And he said to him: Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering, said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and, having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way; and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him; and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine: and setting him upon his own beast, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him: and whatsoever thou shalt spend over

and above, I at my return will repay thee. Which of these three in thy opinion was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go and do thou in like manner."

In immediate connection with the Epistle of to-day, the Gospel reminds us of the great advantages of the law of grace of the New Testament over the Old Testament; the Saviour calls His disciples blessed, because they had the happiness of living in the time of grace of the New Testament, where they could see Him, and hear His teachings, a grace which so many chosen men of the old law, so many kings and prophets had in vain desired. Our Saviour, however, calls His disciples blessed, not only because they saw and heard Him, although the Jews living in that time enjoyed the same privilege, but for the reason that they not only received, but also practiced His divine doctrine. Venerable Bede makes the following beautiful remarks in reference to the above. He says: "Not the eyes of the scribes and pharisees, who saw the Lord only according to His flesh, but those eyes were blessed who could see His divine mysteries of which He Himself says (to His heavenly Father): 'Thou hast revealed them to little ones.' (Matt. 11: 25.) 'Blessed are the eyes of those little ones to whom the Son revealed Himself and the Father. Abraham rejoiced that he might see my day; he saw it (in spirit) and was glad.' (John 8: 56.) Isaias also, and Micheas, and many other Prophets have seen the glory of the Lord, on account of which they were called *seers;* but they have only seen Him from afar, and as if reflected in a dark mirror. The Apostles, however, had the Lord with them; they ate with Him, questioned Him, and learned of Him whatever they wished, without standing in need of being instructed by Angels or by other revelations."

Our Saviour further instructs us what it is necessary for us to do to possess eternal life, comprising it in the two great commandments of loving God, and our neighbor. He then more fully explains, by the parable of the good Samaritan, how the commandment of loving our neighbor should be understood and practiced; not according to the one-sided and very imperfect perception of the doctors of the law of that time, who regarded the Jews as their only relatives and friends, and who refused to consider strangers or Gentiles as their neighbors. He desired us to understand by the above narrative, and by the inference He drew from it: "*Go and do thou in like manner,*" to consider every man, without distinction, whether known or unknown, friend or enemy, believer or unbeliever, as our neighbor, and if he is in need, and we possess the means of assisting him, to show him love, sympathy, and assistance, just as the Samaritan assisted the Jew who had been wounded, by exposing even his own life, although the Jews despised the Samaritans.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

ST. ADELWOLD.

(August 1.)

"The Elect."

NEARLY a thousand years ago there lived at Winchester, in England, a pious couple to whom was born a son, named Adelwold.

The boy received a most careful education, and evinced great talent and no less assiduity. Even in his early youth his heart was filled with the true love and fear of God. On attaining the canonical age, he was, together with Dunstan and Edelstan, two other young Levites, ordained by St. Elphege, then Bishop of Winchester. After the Mass of ordination, the holy prelate uttered these prophetic words: "I have just ordained three clerks; two will become Bishops, but the third will suffer himself to be allured by the world, and will die wretchedly." Edelstan, who was nearly related to the Bishop, asked whether he was one of those who would rise to the episcopate; but St. Elphege replied: "No, for thou wilt not remain in the state of grace in which thou appearest to be in the eyes of men;" and the Bishop's prediction came true, for Edelstan fell a victim to his worldly passions.

Adelwold entered the abbey of Glastenbury in order to drink deep of the science of salvation and sacred letters under the Abbot of that house. He ultimately became Dean, but was so little puffed up by his elevation that he continued to labor in the garden, and bring in fruits and vegetables for the meals of the brethren.

At that time, the monastery of Abingdon was falling to decay, but King Edred, the Pious, endowed it with large revenues, and appointed Adelwold Prior. Adelwold established exemplary rules, and the house was soon filled with men

who devoted themselves zealously and heartily to the service of God, so that Abingdon became celebrated for the great number and sanctity of its religious.

Meanwhile Dunstan, who had been ordained with Adelwold, was appointed Bishop of Winchester, and a few years later, Archbishop of Canterbury. In that position he ruled the Church in England for thirty-seven years. He was as firm as a pillar in word and deed, glorious in charity and prophecy, and many miracles occurred near his grave after he had terminated his holy career on earth.

St. Adelwold was consecrated Bishop of Winchester by St. Dunstan, when the latter was promoted. The first act of the new Bishop was to purify the Church, so that disorderly and wicked priests should no longer injure her. He removed the incorrigible, and replaced them by monks from Abingdon. But as the fallen Angels became not only wicked, but even devils, thus also a fallen priest who is caught in the snares of the evil one, sinks much deeper than other men. Some of the wicked priests to whom the beneficial regulations of the new Bishop appeared insupportable, resolved to do away with him, so that they might be again enabled to lead their former life of insubordination and wickedness. Once, when Adelwold was entertaining some guests, they put poison in his wine, and scarcely had he emptied his glass, when he became pale, and was seized with the most violent pains. He left the table, and retired to his room, and the wicked monks seemed to have attained their purpose; for the effect of the poison was such that death appeared almost unavoidable. But in the moment of the greatest agony, Adelwold regained his courage, and said to himself: "Where is my faith? Are not the words of Christ true, in which He promises in the Gospel: 'If they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.' (Mark 16 : 18.) Is He who spoke thus not Himself present? He who is able to accomplish everything, can certainly also destroy the power of the poison in me." By these and similar words he strengthened more and more the faith of his heart, and by faith he destroyed the poison, and its pain and deadly effect upon his body, so that he could return to his guests with a countenance full of serenity, showing no longer the least trace of paleness. Thus, by divine assistance, was the nefarious design of his enemies frustrated.

St. Adelwold established many monasteries in different parts of his diocese; for he was convinced that a house of monks, who lived strictly up to the spirit of their order, was of greater benefit to the people than if only here and there a few secular priests were charged with the care of souls. In inspecting and visiting the monasteries, he showed himself as terrible as a lion toward perverted and ill-disposed priests, but mild as a lamb toward those who were humble and obedient. Although his zeal for the order and welfare of the Church sometimes obliged him to inflict punishment, his severity did not proceed from cruelty, but love; he loved in his heart with the tenderness of a father those whom he found it necessary to punish severely. He cared for, and loved

his priests as though they were his sons, never refused his protection to virgins or widows, was hospitable to strangers, was a courageous defender of the Church, a guide to the erring, and a supporter of the poor and orphans.

Once during the lifetime of Adelwold, England suffered much from a famine. He sacrificed all his means for the support of the suffering, and when he had given away all he had, he sold the jewels and silver-vessels of his church; for it seemed cruel to him to leave the dead metal untouched, whilst man, created in the likeness of God, and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, was left to perish from poverty and want. He purchased provisions, and supported great numbers who came from all parts to him in order to escape starvation. By daily distribution of food he saved many who were lying half dead in the streets and public places.

Adelwold suffered much from sickness, but though his pains allowed him but little sleep in the night, he labored and worked during the day as if he had been in perfect health. He liked especially the society of young men whom he endeavored to assist by his instruction and advice. Several of those who enjoyed his friendship were influenced thereby to devote themselves to the service of the Church, and some were even afterwards chosen Abbots and Bishops.

The death of St. Adelwold, which occurred in the year 984, was glorified by God and the world; by the world, for the large number of rich and poor, of young and old, who came from all parts to be present at his obsequies, manifested great sadness and veneration; by God, for miraculous cures occurred.

The Church teaches that the man who attains salvation, has been elected for that purpose from all eternity through God's decree, and if we reflect on what we have just read concerning St. Adelwold and the priest Edelstan, who had been ordained with him, we will fully comprehend the truth of that doctrine. But if the salvation or rejection of every man is preordained, is it then worth while to strive to lead a virtuous life? If such is the case, will any man be able to escape the fate designed for him? Not at all, dear reader; predestination must be understood in a different sense. It is God's will that every man shall attain the knowledge of truth, virtue, and salvation. This is clearly expressed in the Gospel. It is not the will of God that this or that man should be lost; but He foreknows the use that every man will make of his free will, either for good or for evil, and, therefore, He also fore-knows and pre-ordains that this or that man shall be saved or rejected. You are called and destined to be saved; bat whether you will attain your salvation depends upon yourself. If you will make use of the graces offered to you on the part of God to lead a truly Christian life until the moment of your death, then you will be saved; but if you do not, then you are destined to be eternally lost; but remember that it is through your own fault.

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI.

(August 2.)

"Missions."

THIS Saint, who lived during the last century, was born in the city of Naples, and canonized in the year 1836. His parents were pious Christians of high rank, and his mother especially did all in her power to have her son well educated. When he was ten years old, he was once playing with some boys, when one of them from whom he had won some money, accused him of having cheated them. Young Liguori felt very indignant at this accusation, and throwing down the money he had won, he said: "Do you think that I would offend God's Majesty for the sake of a paltry piece of money?" and he left them immediately. It was already evening when his companions, having searched for him, found him in the garden praying on his knees before a tree to which he had fastened a little image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The boy who had unjustly reproached the pious Alphonsus, was so deeply touched at this sight that he exclaimed: "Alas! what have I done? I have grieved a Saint!"

Alphonsus was so industrious, and made such rapid progress in study that the degree of Doctor was conferred upon him when he was but seventeen years old, and he was declared competent to teach the sciences; but not less great was his zeal in the pious exercise of his religious duties; he received holy communion once a week, and made a daily visit to the most Blessed Sacrament.

Young Liguori first devoted himself to the practice of law, and soon enjoyed a great reputation as a lawyer. In a very important law-suit between two princes he advocated the cause of the one whose claims he thought just; but he had overlooked a circumstance to which the lawyer of the opposite side especially directed the attention of the judge, and Alphonsus lost the suit. He was sincere enough to declare before the court that he had been mistaken and wrong in his opinion; but this incident gave him a disgust for all worldly affairs. Having returned home, he retired to his room, where he remained for three days without tasting any food, and at length formed the resolution to leave the world, and to serve God alone. His father and relatives, however, strongly opposed his determination, especially as they had already taken the preliminary steps of betrothing him to the daughter of a prince. But threats, bitter reproaches, flattering promises, even abuse on the part of his father, alike failed to divert him from his purpose; he declared firmly: "God calls me, and it is impossible for me to resist His command;" and he, therefore, became a priest. Although the father of Alphonsus was not destitute of religious feeling, he nevertheless had his worldly plans so much at heart that he almost fainted when he saw his son in the clerical dress for the first time, and a whole year elapsed before he would speak to him.

Alphonsus remained faithful to what he recognized as the will of God; he advanced constantly in Christian perfection, and after he had joined the missionaries, he preached daily with the greatest success. His father once entered a church where he was preaching; at first he was very angry when he saw his son in the pulpit, and was inclined to leave the house of God; but the longer he listened to the holy man, the more his heart was touched, and he left the church with the determination of being reconciled to his son. When he met Alphonsus, he embraced him, and begged his pardon for having ever opposed his vocation, and he positively declared that it was owing to his son that he had obtained a true knowledge of God.

St. Alphonsus had been a priest a year before he could summon resolution to hear confessions; in his humility and conscientiousness he imagined that he did not possess ability for such an important office; but when his Superior commanded him to discharge this duty, he displayed in this regard not less zeal than he did in his sermons. He was also a most charitable, kind, and patient confessor, and used to say: "The more deeply a sinner has fallen into the slavery of vice, the more should we endeavor to snatch him from the jaws of Satan, by the sweet power of kindness and love, and lead him again to the loving heart of his heavenly Father."

After Alphonsus had labored for a long time as instructor, preacher, and confessor for the kingdom of God in different places, and especially in Naples, he fell sick. He retired to the country in order to regain his health, and remained for a while in Amalfi and Scala; but even here he allowed himself no rest. With several priests, similarly disposed, he visited the scattered shepherds and peasants, instructed them in their religion, and administered the Sacraments. When he was once preaching in a convent, he was told by a very godly nun, named Castarosa, that God had called him to establish a congregation of missionaries for poor and forsaken souls.

Great interior solicitudes and exterior obstacles were not able to divert Alphonsus from following the vocation to which God had called him. Several pious priests and a nobleman joined him. They formed a community at Scala in such poverty that their beds were only bags of straw, and their only food bread and water, which they took kneeling. Three times each week they scourged themselves with the discipline. The lives of the Saints was their daily reading; they spoke only of divine matters, and spent a part of the night before the most holy Sacrament of the Altar. They made the simple vow of obedience, poverty, and chastity, and bound themselves to obey their Superior, to which dignity they chose St. Liguori. In the year 1749, Pope Benedict XIV. confirmed the rule of the new society, the members of which were called Redemptorists (Society of the Most Holy Redeemer), and since its foundation the order has been widely spread, and missions have been given beyond all calculation in all parts down to the present day.

Wherever St. Alphonsus and his followers gave missions, they first visited the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, then walked in procession through the streets of the place, called upon the people to do penance, and invited them to come into the church. During the first days they preached upon the terrible truths of religion, choosing for their subjects, sin, hell, and the giving of scandal. Then for three or four days directions were given for the leading of a pious life, and prayer; the Passion of Christ, patience, and the use of the holy Sacraments were the subjects of their sermons. The communicants were divided into classes —children, virgins, married women, young men, and married men, each class being separately prepared for the reception of the Sacraments. The subject of the last day's preaching was perseverance, and the mission closed with the setting up of five crosses, whilst the Passion of Christ was explained to the people. Each priest during the time of the mission had to be seven hours every day in the confessional; only two dishes were ever placed upon the dinner-table, and the priests were never allowed to accept anything as a present with the exception of what was absolutely necessary. These missions were most beneficial in their results; enemies were reconciled, slanders recalled, goods unjustly obtained restored, offences and scandal done away with, and many who had fallen into mortal sin became pious Christians. Immoral books and pictures were brought from all parts, and publicly burnt before the churches, and the people became zealous in prayer, in the reception of the holy Sacraments, and in the exercise of charity.

How many souls have been saved by means of such missions is known only to God, and will be known to us hereafter. To a place in which a mission is held we can say: "God offers to the whole community the grace of becoming reconciled with Him. The daily sermons and prayers, the example of so many who zealously participate in the pious exercises, even the sight of the missionaries who, in the pulpit and in the confessional, disinterestedly exert themselves for the good of the people, produces a remarkable effect upon sinners, and many who were looked upon as past conversion, repent, and become more zealous in the discharge of the duties of their religion than many who have looked upon themselves as good Christians. We shall indeed be astonished hereafter, when we see the number of those who, like burning brands snatched from the fire, have been torn from the clutches of Satan by means of such missions. Therefore every good pastor, if it is in his power, should endeavor to have a mission given in his parish, and the truly pious who have their own salvation, and that of their fellow-men at heart, will rejoice when the opportunity is offered them of attending upon the religious exercises of a mission, and they will endeavor to bring all sinners to it in whom they feel a special interest. Of such missionaries we may justly say: 'He who hears you, hears me,' (Luke 10 : 16,) and to those who have it in their power to attend the mission, we say: 'To-day, if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts.'" (Hebr. 3 : 7–8.)

St. Liguori, from the very establishment of his order, had the consolation of having as coadjutors men animated by a zeal inferior only to his own, and he himself may be truly looked upon as a perfect model of Evangelic life. He gave all that he possessed to the order, and lived for some time in a closet under a staircase. His cell contained a few old chairs, a small table, an earthen lamp, a wooden crucifix, some common pictures of Saints, a sack filled with straw, a few books, and some paper. He would frequently wear the garments cast aside by members of the order as no longer fit for use, and thus clad, he visited the poorest beggar and persons of the highest rank. Bread and soup was his principal food, and even in the most bitter cold of winter he would never allow himself the comfort of a fire.

God manifested his approval of his servant's pious life by miracles, and in granting his assistance in overcoming the obstacles, slander, and opposition St. Alphonsus met with in his efforts for the good cause. Many dioceses in vain wished him as Bishop, until at length the Pope appointed him Bishop of St. Agatha de Goti, and as it was his duty to obey, he showed himself also perfect in the responsible position to which he had been elevated, although against his wish. He entered upon the duties of his holy office by giving missions in all parts of his diocese, and while he, as Bishop, continued his former rigid and self-denying life, he was in the highest degree charitable and kind towards his fellow-men, and once even sold his possessions, and distributed the proceeds among the poor and needy. In consequence of his incessant and excessive labors and efforts, the body of Alphonsus had become greatly enfeebled, so that during the last seventeen years of his life his head almost rested upon his breast, as is usually seen in the likenesses we possess of him. The saintly Bishop, nevertheless, labored indefatigably, although he repeatedly begged the Pope to release him from the burdens of the Episcopal office. When his request was at last granted, he returned to the house of his congregation as poor as he had left it; but as long as he could move about, he was still active in preaching and in hearing confessions, and when he could no longer do this, he labored for the cause of religion by the power of his pen. His pious and well-known writings have been a source of consolation and blessing to the clergy and the faithful in all lands.

When St. Alphonsus, despite of his rigid fasting, watching, mortifications, and excessive labors, had reached the great age of ninety-one years, he yielded up his faithful spirit into the hands of God. The last Pope, Gregory XVI., canonized him in 1830, and the order founded by this Saint, *the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*, has been firmly established in many countries, and continues to labor by its missions for the conversion of sinners.

BLESSED CATHARINE THOMAS.

(August 3.)

"Devoteeism."

At the time when the celebrated St. Teresa lived in Spain, Majorca enjoyed the blessing of possessing a saintly virgin, Catharine Thomas, the daughter of noble parents, who was distinguished for her great beauty. She despised all worldly pleasures, and her only delight was to pray and mortify herself, to say her beads regularly, and to listen to the word of God.

Catharine was but seven years old when her parents died, and she was received into the family of her uncle, her mother's brother. He was a husbandman, and of a very imperious nature, demanding strict submission to his will. The saintly Catharine could no longer, as she had formerly done, when in the house of her parents, spend her time in praying and in visiting the house of God; but even on festivals she was often obliged to remain at home. In her sad state she did all in her power to satisfy the pious longings of her heart; she prayed in silence, meditated on divine truths at her work, and gave much of the night to devotions. Her piety was treated in the family as hypocrisy. Now persons desiring to lead a pious life are called devotees; some whose devotion neither is of God, nor leads to God, may well be styled so, but we can see in Blessed Catharine the distinction between solid piety and hypocritical devotion. Some pray much, are always going to church or on pilgimages, but dislike work, and neglect even the absolute duties of their state of life. This is hypocrisy.

Catharine's uncle, suspecting her of neglecting her duties, watched her while she was tending the sheep. He saw her standing for a long time motionless. Convinced that she was not watching, he hastened to the spot where she stood with the intention of punishing her for negligence; but he found everything in good order, so that he could not even reproach the pious shepherdess. In fact her heart was occupied with God while she was watching the flock, but in such a manner that it did not interfere with her usefulness; and even when cruelly overburdened with other kinds of work, as was often the case, she used all her strength to discharge her duty properly.

There are others who go to church, but who nevertheless indulge in the wicked habit of abusing their pastor, talk about their confessions, and who even seek the society of persons of the other sex. This is hypocrisy, and not true piety. Although Catharine met many young and even rude men in the house of her uncle, the purity of her character was never in the least contaminated thereby. Her mortifications, the grave expression of her countenance, and her great modesty and reserve protected her from the dangerous passions of others.

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UNDER THE APPROBATIONS

OF THE FOLLOWING

EMINENT DIGNITARIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

JOHN McCLOSKEY, Archbishop of New York.

His Eminence J. v. GEISSEL, Cardinal-Archbishop of Cologne.
The Most Rev. Prince-Archbishop of Vienna.
The Most Rev. Prince-Bishop of Breslau.

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Certain pious persons often see a great deal to blame in other people, but are very well satisfied with themselves, and believe that they themselves enjoy the favor of God, and that heaven will be their sure inheritance. Such persons deceive themselves, and are not really aspiring after holiness. Catharine, on the contrary, was frequently dissatisfied with herself, and regarded herself as an ungrateful, negligent, faithless servant of God, and not worthy of the many graces she enjoyed. These manifestations of dissatisfaction were not with her mere empty words, but were caused by the real anxiety and fear she felt for the salvation of her soul. We see the same state of mind, as exhibited by Catharine, shown by St. Liguori, whose memory we commemorated yesterday. There were not only times during which his soul felt joyless in the exercises of religion, but also greatly tempted and disturbed. While in this state of fear regarding the salvation of his soul, some one tried to comfort him by saying that he had nothing to fear, on account of the many good works he had accomplished; but the Saint replied: "What good works? My only hope is in Jesus Christ, and after Him in Mary."

After joining a religious order, Catharine grieved in her true humility at the great reverence shown her on account of her uncommon piety; and as a devotee does all in her power to appear venerable in the eyes of man, thus Catharine strove with all her power to conceal her great virtues from others. She feigned for that purpose the manners and language of a rude peasant girl, and when one of the sisters once told her that she was not fit for anything, and would never be of any use in the convent, she neither excused herself nor felt on that account anger or sorrow, but thanked the sister for having reproached her, and she begged the other sisters never to be blind to her faults or neglect of duty.

Catharine had to undergo great temptations from the evil one, but she was also consoled by heavenly visions and revelations; yet she took care to conceal it as much as possible from the sisters, for she feared every distinction as much as a devotee would have delighted in them.

Devotees prefer rather to command than to obey; they sometimes even refuse to obey the just commands of their confessors, parents, or superiors; they like to preside over pious associations, or else to be among the leading members. Blessed Catharine obeyed the least wish of her superior scrupulously and faithfully, and although she was, later, on account of her sickness, dispensed from all service in the convent, she never made use of it, and as soon as the bell rang, she would drag herself along the wall to the place where, in former days, when still in health, she had done her work. When, by reason of her great sanctity and merit, she was chosen Abbess, she endeavored to convince the Bishop that she was not capable, and was indeed unworthy of such an important office, and at last succeeded in having another sister chosen.

You see, then, that the Christian spirit of true humility and love that animated Blessed Catharine, does not dwell in those whom we have classed as devotees

and hypocrites. We beseech you, therefore, to examine yourself, and not apply what we have said to other people; for by doing so you would certainly show yourself to be guilty of the very sins against which we have warned you.

Catharine predicted the day of her death, and when her last hour on earth had come, and she had received the Blessed Sacrament, and all the sisters were assembled around her, she begged their pardon, comforted and admonished them, and had the following verses read to her from the thirtieth Psalm: "In thee, O Lord, have I hoped: let me never be confounded: deliver me in thy justice. Bow down thy ear to me: make haste to deliver me. Be thou unto me a God, a protector, and a house of refuge to save me. For thou art my strength and my refuge: and for thy name's sake thou wilt lead me, and nourish me. Thou wilt bring me out of this snare, which they have hidden for me: for thou art my protector. *Into thy hands I commend my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.*"

And while these words were read, she yielded up her spirit.

ST. DOMINIC.

(August 4.)

"The Rosary."

ST. DOMINIC is generally represented with a dog by his side holding a burning torch; for the mother of the Saint shortly before his birth dreamed that she would bring forth a dog, with a blazing torch in his mouth. The glorious life of the Saint later showed the true meaning of his mother's dream.

Dominic was born in Spain, of honest parents, and devoted himself to the service of the Church. His piety and industry while yet a student, were so great that he spent many nights watching and reading good books. He was twenty-one years old when the country suffered much from drought, and his great love for his fellow-men, kindled by the true spirit of Christ that dwelt in him, prompted him to give first his money, then to sell his furniture, and finally even to sacrifice the last and dearest thing he possessed, his books, for the assistance of the poor. At that time (1200 years after Christ) the art of printing was not yet invented, and the books which were all written by hand, were regarded as real treasures. Many, therefore, found fault with his sacrificing them; but Dominic replied: "What does it matter? Shall I brood over dead parchments while my brothers perish with hunger?"

Upon another occasion he asked a woman whom he saw in tears the cause of her grief. She told him that her brother had been taken captive by the Saracens, and that she was too poor to procure the amount of money necessary for his ransom. The pious student, who had no means to assist the woman, immediately declared his readiness to go as a slave in the place of her brother, but the poor woman would not permit it.

Diego, Bishop of Osma, being informed of the godliness and great virtues of the young priest Dominic, made him a canon of his cathedral. Here he advanced constantly in piety, and kneeling for hours on the marble-floor of the church, his truly Christian heart mourned for his erring and sinning fellow-creatures, while from the very depth of his soul, would he pray for the suffering and afflicted.

Once when Dominic had accompanied the Bishop on a journey, they came to the city of Toulouse. At that time many of the inhabitants of that city had fallen into the heresy of the Albigenses; the landlord and his family with whom they had taken lodgings, had also embraced the abominable heresy. It was most painful to the Christian heart of Dominic to leave these people who had received them so hospitably given up to the evil of a false faith, and he, therefore, commenced a long religious conversation with their host. The clearness of his arguments, and the loving sympathy manifested by his words, had at last such an effect that, convinced of his errors by Dominic, the landlord with his whole family returned to the Catholic Church. And here, and from that moment, commenced the real activity and great efficacy of St. Dominic's life.

At that time the Albigenses in France were bitter enemies of the Catholic Church. Assisted by powerful nobles who sought to advance themselves by oppressing the priests, the Albigenses scorned the true worship of God, destroyed the churches, persecuted the priests, and rising even against the government wandered about in large troops, and pillaged villages and cities. Some Cistercians had been sent by the Pope to check the evil, but in vain. Then St. Dominic felt himself inspired to devote his life to the conversion of the heretics. He held conferences, lasting sometimes for weeks, with the leaders in the different places infected with the heresy, and hundreds returned to the Church. Once he wrote down on a paper the principal arguments by which he refuted the false doctrine, and handed it to one of the leading heretics for his reflection. The latter showed it to several others with whom he was sitting near the fire. "Let us throw the writing into the fire," they exclaimed, "and if it does not burn we will believe that God is with the Catholic doctrine." And, behold! the paper on which the arguments were written, was not burned, although it was thrown three times into the flames. But these people were so hardened that they, nevertheless, persisted in their heresy, and agreed to conceal the miracle. However one, a soldier, convinced of his error, returned penitently to the Catholic Church, and through him the miraculous incident became known.

Dominic relied so much upon the convincing power of the Catholic truth and that of God, that in his meetings and discussions with the heretics he took his very opponents as umpires to decide whether he was speaking the truth or not. In consequence of such a debate five hundred Albigenses once returned to the Catholic Church, and among them Arnold of Campranhan who had acted as umpire.

The Albigenses were especially active in instilling the poison of their heresy into the confiding hearts of the young, and for that purpose they offered to the poor, especially to those of the higher classes, to take care of the education of their children. Thus many mothers, who interested themselves more in the worldly education of their daughters than in their salvation, were induced to send them to the institutes of the Albigenses, and after a few years the latter returned home completely infected with the poison of heresy. Dominic did all in his power to remedy this evil. With the aid of the Bishops he established a convent of Augustinian nuns who received, instructed and educated the daughters of such as were unable to pay for an education suitable to their rank in society.

At last a very bloody and most cruel war broke out between the Catholics and Albigenses; but though the hatred of the heretics against the Catholics was increased thereby, Dominic frequently, at the peril of his life, continued visiting the villages and houses of the Albigenses for the purpose of preaching to them the true religion. Once they hired two assassins to murder St. Dominic, but God protected his faithful servant. When several of the heretics asked him afterwards what he would have done if he had fallen into the hands of the assassins, Dominic replied: "I would have thanked God, and besought them to prolong my torments in order to suffer more. But I am not yet worthy of a martyr's crown."

St. Dominic was told by a poor woman that she only adhered to the heresy of the Albigenses, because they supported her, and that she would lose this support if she returned to the Church. Dominic, the true follower of Christ, was himself so poor that he could not assist the woman; but to save her soul, which was so precious in his eyes, he was ready to sell himself as a slave, and with the proceeds free the poor woman from the slavery of the heretics; divine Providence, however, saved the woman by other means.

The Albigenses asserted that the Catholic priests were not followers of Christ, and had departed from the true religion, because Christ and the Apostles had lived in the utmost poverty. The Saviour does not forbid the possession and enjoyment of earthly things; but he forbids us to set our heart upon them, and to make ourselves slaves to them. Yet in order to be still nearer to His Lord, St. Dominic lived a most self-denying life, and never indulged in any comfort. Once, during his missionary travels, he had been hospitably received in the house of several noble Albigensian women, but when they saw their guest taste only bread and water, and sleep on the bare floor, this rigid and evangelic

abstemiousness made such an impression upon them that they believed in his teachings, and returned to the Catholic Church.

Once remaining in church after sermon in fervent prayer, the Abbot of the monastery, who had invited him to dinner, sent a priest for him. Entering the church, he perceived St. Dominic motionless, and in an ecstacy suspended in the air several yards from the floor. The priest dared not address him until Dominic, coming to himself, slowly descended again.

When great evils begin to spread in the world, threatening especially to injure the Catholic Church, then the Lord sometimes calls forth a new religious order, well qualified to check those evils. This was verified also in the times of St. Dominic. God presented to the Church through St. Dominic the order of Preachers, to remedy the constantly increasing moral evil of heresy. Other orders were either too rich, too much devoted to study, or too secluded from the world to combat effectually against the errors of the Albigenses, and the heresies everywhere propagated by them. Dominic, taught by his own long experience, and that of his companions, clearly saw the remedy required to check the evil, and with those associated with him in the good cause, he founded a new order whose principal task it was to propagate Christian truth by means of preaching.

Dominic, when on his journey to Rome to submit his rule to the Pope, was one night engaged in prayer, and he had a vision. He saw our Saviour with an angry countenance throw three spears from heaven upon the earth. The most Blessed Virgin stepped before Him presenting two men to Him for the expiation of the sinful world. Dominic recognized in the one himself, but the other was unknown to him. The next day, however, he saw in the church a man who looked precisely like the one he had not recognized. He immediately went to him, and said most joyfully: "Thou art my companion; we will together fight for the cause of the Lord," and he related to him his vision. This man was St. Francis of Assisi, whom God had also inspired for a similar work, and who founded the celebrated order of Franciscans.

It is not our intention to give here a full account of the rapid progress of the order of Dominicans, and the rich blessings resulting from its establishment. We are making but a short sketch of the life of its founder, and can speak only of the works accomplished by him. Dominic preached daily in the city of Bologna, and sometimes several times during the day. Once, as he descended from the pulpit, he was asked in what book he had studied his sermon, and his answer was: "*In the book of love.*" And, indeed, it was love and charity that he recommended to his friars as the best, and, in fact, indispensable means of preaching well and successfully. When preparing his sermons, he would read daily the Gospel of Matthew, and the Epistles of St. Paul, and exhorted also his followers to read them diligently. When conversing with others, he always called their attention to some edifying matter, and when traveling he kept at some distance from his companions in order to be undisturbed in meditation.

A Dominican who was frequently with St. Dominic, writes thus: "He devoted the morning to gladness, the evening to tears, the day to his fellow-men, and the night to God, knowing well that God intended the day for works of charity, and the night for the offering up of thanks."

Besides being the founder of a great religious order spreading over all Christian countries, and producing many Saints and great scholars, Dominic is also distinguished for another work that will undoubtedly continue and be practiced by millions of Christians until the day of judgment—he established the ROSARY.

By the Rosary all the pious assembled at church, are enabled to offer up this prayer in common, and this their prayer rising from so many hearts, forms as it were a chaplet of flowers. The united prayer of so many ascending to heaven as from one heart, cannot but be pleasing to God. The institution of the Rosary, moreover, is of such a beneficial nature that even one who cannot read is able to practice it just as well as the most learned priest. In saying the Rosary, the greatest and most important truths of Christianity are expressed, and the pious soul is thus excited to the rendering of thanks, to love, repentance, hope, and joy; that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, carried by Mary to Elizabeth, born of the Virgin, offered up in the temple, and found again in the temple; that Jesus was covered with a sweat of blood, was scourged, crowned with thorns, burdened with the heavy cross, and crucified for our sake; that Jesus rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, sent down the Holy Ghost, and received and crowned in heaven His blessed mother. Each of these truths is repeated ten times that it may become lastingly imprinted on the mind. In this prayer the Blessed Virgin is especially honored, and her intercession continually asked, for the reason that she is the most pleasing and dearest to God of all His creation, and at the same time we humble ourselves, call ourselves poor sinners, and meditate upon the important hour of death.

And now, dear reader, we will propose to you something that can be easily accomplished, and that will certainly be of great benefit to you. Say every day a part of your Rosary, so that in five days you will finish the joyful, in five the sorrowful, and in five the glorious mysteries, and thus finish twice every month the Psalter, or the three parts of the Rosary. Certainly the Blessed Mother of God, who, although not called upon, interceded at the wedding-feast at Cana, because there was not wine enough, will not forget you, and will intercede most especially for you at the hour of death, if you have for that purpose implored her daily, when in health, by saying the Rosary.

St. Dominic, on a hot summer day, once went on foot from Milan to Bologna, and, though exhausted with heat and fatigue, he hastened immediately after his arrival to the church where he spent the whole night in prayer. The next morning he had a violent attack of fever which terminated in death. To the brothers who surrounded his death-bed, he said: "I leave you a three-fold in-

heritance: love, humility, and poverty. He who accepts this legacy, will inherit with me the kingdom of heaven. Grieve not at my departure from your midst, dear brethren; whither I now go, I shall be able to be more useful to you than here on earth." St. Dominic died on the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ in the year 1221, in the fifty-first year of his age

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ST. AFRA.

(August 5.)

"Impurity."

DURING the persecution of Diocletian, the holy Bishop Narcissus and his Deacon Felix came to the city of Augsburg, and took lodgings in the house of a woman, named Afra. This woman had been consecrated by her mother to Venus, and supposing the strangers to have come to her house for a sinful purpose, she prepared a feast for them; but how great was her astonishment and dismay, when the Bishop commenced praying aloud before touching his supper! She asked the stranger who he was, and being told that he was a Christian Bishop, she fell at his feet, saying: "My Lord, I am a wretched creature, and there is not in this city so shameless and contemptible a woman." Whereupon Narcissus replied: "Our Saviour does not wish to be polluted by the wicked; for His sanctity has driven out, and purified all uncleanness, and no impurity must approach the shining brightness of the Lord. Therefore, my daughter, receive the light of faith in order to become purified from all sin, and to rejoice in purity everlasting." But Afra said: "How can I be cleansed, and freed from my great impurity, my sins being more numerous than the hairs of my head!" "Have only faith and be baptized, and you will be saved," was the reply of the Bishop. Then Afra called together her servants, and addressed them thus: "The man who has come to us is a Christian Bishop, and he has said to me: 'If you will believe in Christ, and be baptized, you will be freed from your sins.' What do you think of this?" And Digna, Eunomia, and Eutropia answered, and said: "We have followed you on the road of sin, why should we not follow you where our sins will be forgiven?"

The next morning Afra went to her mother Hilaria, and spoke thus: "There has come to me a Bishop of the Christians not knowing where to find refuge; he prayed the whole night to his God stretching his hands towards heaven, and he invited us to pray with him. But then men came to me who searched for the Bishop and his Deacon in order to seize and kill them, because they are Chris-

tians. I had concealed them, however, under a pile of flax; yet still fearing that their persecutors might discover them, I have hastened to ask your permission to bring them to your house; for the Bishop has promised to make me a Christian, and that all my sins shall be forgiven."

Hilaria, filled with joy, said: "May it please God to do to me likewise." When it was night, Afra entreated the Bishop to go to the house of her mother. Hilaria, on his arrival, clung to the feet of Narcissus, saying: "I entreat you, my lord, to free me from my sins."

The saintly Bishop instructed the women in the word of God, and Hilaria, her daughter Afra, and all her servants and relatives were baptized, and received into the Church. He changed the house of Hilaria into a church, ordained Dionys, a cousin of Afra, and after he had labored there nine months for the cause of God, he returned to Spain, to the city of Gerona.

St. Chrysostom says that *to be possessed with sin is still worse than to be possessed with the evil one; sin is a self-created demon*, and, indeed, such a self-created demon is impurity. There is in the sight of the heavenly spirits no monster more hideous than a man given up to sensuality, and as the devil destroys the body and leads the soul to hell, so also will the sin of impurity, the self-created demon, destroy the body and ruin the soul. It requires a supernatural power to cast out this devil, the power of Jesus Christ in His teachings and in the holy Sacraments.

At last the cruel persecution broke out afresh in the city of Augsburg, and many were tortured, because they worshiped the true God. Afra was seized, and brought before a judge, named Gaius, who said: "Worship the idols in order to escape punishment." *Afra.* I sinned enough against God when I knew Him not; now I shall not do your bidding. *Gaius.* Go to the capitol, and sacrifice to the gods! *Afra.* My capitol is Christ whom I have before mine eyes, to whom I daily confess my shame and my sins, and for whose sake I long to sacrifice myself, so that the body wherewith I have sinned may be tortured, cleansed, and purified. *Gaius.* Thou art a vile woman, as I know, go then and worship the gods; for thou art a stranger to the God of the Christians. *Afra.* My Lord Jesus Christ has said that He came down from heaven for the sake of sinners. The Gospel tells us that a sinful woman washed His feet, and received forgiveness of her sins; that He neither despised her nor public sinners, and that He even sat with them at the same table. *Gaius.* Sacrifice to the gods that thou mayest please thy lovers who will give thee money. *Afra.* I shall never again take such cursed money. What I had of such I threw away like dust, for it was earned by sin. *Gaius.* Christ regards thee as unworthy to call Him God. He does not know thee; for she who is a public sinner cannot be called a Christian. *Afra.* That is true; but God, who in His judgments is not guided by our merit, but by His goodness has admitted me to the confession of His name. *Gaius.* How dost thou know that He has chosen thee? *Afra.* I know that I am not

the last in the sight of God; for I have been brought to the knowledge of His holy name whereby I hope to obtain forgiveness of all my sins. *Gaius.* Thou believest in fables; thou shouldst rather worship the gods through whom thou wilt obtain salvation. *Afra.* My salvation is Christ who, while on the cross, promised Paradise to the penitent thief who confessed his sins. *Gaius.* I tell thee again, offer sacrifice to the gods that I may not be obliged to order thee to be scourged in the presence of thy old lovers. *Afra.* That cannot disgrace me; I can only be disgraced by sin. *Gaius.* I am tired of disputing with thee; worship the gods, or thou shalt be put to death. *Afra.* That is what I desire. *Gaius.* Sacrifice, or I shall command thee to be put on the rack, and then burned alive. *Afra.* My body may suffer all possible tortures, but my soul shall never again be guilty of worshiping false gods.

Then the judge pronounced the sentence: "We command that Afra, the public sinner, who refuses to worship our gods, and who calls herself a Christian, be burned alive." Hereupon she was led to the place of execution, stripped and fastened to the stake; but she looked heavenward, and prayed thus: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Almighty God, who hast come not to call the just, but sinners to repentance; for Thou hast said: 'The wickedness of the wicked shall not hurt him in what day soever he shall turn from his wickedness.' Receive my repentance in this the last hour of my life, and through the temporal fire, that is prepared for me, save me from the everlasting fire that consumes both body and soul." And when the torch had been applied to the pile, and the flames were rising, a voice was heard saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, I thank Thee, who hast deigned to accept me as a sacrifice for Thy name, Thou who wast offered on the cross as a sacrifice for the whole world, just for the unjust, good for the wicked, blessed for the cursed, sweet for the bitter, sinless for all sinners. I offer Thee my sacrifice, who livest and reignest with the Father and Holy Ghost, God in eternity. Amen." And with these words her spirit departed.

ST. CHREMES.

(August 6.)

"To be a child of God."

This distinguished soldier of Christ lived at a time when the island of Sicily was under the Saracens. We do not know with certainty anything concerning his parentage or native country. He was not young when he resolved to devote himself to the service of God and withdrew from the world to a wild desert, near which the city of Francavilla was afterwards built. In this desert stands a high rock accessible only on the west side. Here Chremes retired and offered to the Most High his thanks for the benefits bestowed upon him, praying day and night and mortifying his body by fasting and watching.

When Duke Roger made war upon the Saracens in Sicily, he came to this rock. The saintly hermit went to congratulate a Prince, who had rendered such great service to the Christian cause, and manifested his joy and respect by presents. But how, you ask, could a poor hermit find presents worthy of the acceptance of a prince?

St. Paul the Apostle says repeatedly: "Whosoever are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God, and if sons, heirs also, heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ, whereby we cry Abba (Father)." (Rom. 8: 14, 15, 17.) —No man in the world is as rich as a true child of God; for such a man has the most wealthy and kind of fathers. And even here on earth God provides His true children with all that is beneficial to them. We see that God often unexpectedly and miraculously provides many Saints who have given every thing away in order to follow Christ, with all that they need to accomplish a good purpose. Such was the case with the pious hermit Chremes. With child-like confidence he entreated his heavenly father to give him something to offer the Duke; and called the wild animals of the woods to his solitary rock. A number of stags, and hares assembled, and the Saint followed by these animals went to meet the Duke, whom he found surrounded by his army. Respectfully saluting the prince, he begged him to accept the flock as a present. Roger and his soldiers were greatly astonished and pleased at this sight, and the Duke asked the saintly hermit, how he had succeeded in making such wild animals so obedient. Chremes told him, that he had called them together from the woods and their coverts; but the Duke thought it impossible that so many animals should at once lose their natural wildness. Then Chremes, in order to show the power of God, turned to the beasts, saying: "Since Roger will not accept you as a present, go and enjoy again your former liberty," and the Saint having blessed them, they all ran off to their forest homes. Roger filled with amazement at this miracle, immediately alighted, threw himself at the feet of

the Saint and said: "Since thy prayer, is so powerful witn God, I entreat thee to recommend me, a sinner, to Him and to pray often for me."

Roger then requested the Saint to lead him to his hermitage, on the inhospitable rock, and, perceiving the commanding view, that it possessed of Etna and the sea and the general fitness of the place for a monastery, he said to Chremes: "I will build here a monastery and endow it with all the forests and fields, that we can overlook from this spot, for the support of its religious; and you shall preside over it and prescribe its rules and regulations"—and recommending himself once more to the prayer of St. Chremes and having received his blessing he returned to his army. Soon after the abbey was built, and many, attracted by the reputation of Chremes, came to this rocky harbor to find in godliness, the liberty of the children of God.

Before St. Chremes decided upon his rule, he endeavored by his own example to lead his disciples to perfection, and then introduced the monastic rule of St. Basil. But among the many who entered some soon wearied at this rigid life. Such easily yield to the power of Satan, and thus the brothers who had become lukewarm in faith, determined to do away with the austere old man whose strict rule denied them all comforts. They conceived the wicked plan of putting Chremes to death, and when he was once walking before the convent, they seized him unawares and precipitated him from the height of the rock.

By divine Providence, the footsteps of the Saint were stamped on the rock where he had fallen. (The spot was afterwards frequently visited by pilgrims). The wicked brothers, in the belief that they had rid themselves of Chremes, rejoiced at their wicked deed, but God sent His angels to the assistance of His faithful servant and they carried him safely to the foot of the rock. The saintly Chremes did not feel the least anger at this abominable deed, but gathered some dry wood and returned with it to the abbey, as if he had merely left it for that purpose.

While the wicked monks were exulting at having freed themselves from their spiritual father, they suddenly perceived Chremes entering with a serene and cheerful countenance. Astonishment and awe made them speechless; they knew not, whether they beheld the spirit of Chremes or Chremes himself. When they at last recovered and knew that Chremes was a true Saint, they threw themselves contrite and weeping at his feet, confessed their shameful deed, and begged his pardon, declaring themselves unworthy to enter his presence. The true father forgave his weeping and repentant children; gave them all the kiss of peace and his blessing and embraced them again in the rich fullness of his loving heart.

Feeling his last hour approach, Chremes assembled the monks, exhorted them most impressively to love each other, to follow the road leading to perfection, and conjured them to bury him before the steps of the church, so that all might step upon him. He then recommended his pure soul to God and

expired while his disciples were embracing and kissing him. It was made manifest by a miracle how agreeable and pleasing this self-humiliation was to God; for a well rose on the spot where the body of Chremes was buried, and we are told that those suffering from fever, who drink with confidence of its clear water, are restored to health.

ST. CAJETAN.

(August 7.)

St. Cajetan belonged to a noble and wealthy family of Vicenza. His pious mother dedicated her child to the most blessed Virgin, and brought him up in the true fear of the Lord. Cajetan, in his early youth manifested the love that prevailed in his heart, by asking alms of his friends and relatives to give to the poor, and frequent fasting, to dispose of his food for the same purpose. Later, when he was occupied with the study of Theology, he showed himself the perfect model of a Christian student; he avoided all unnecessary recreations, and was not less zealous for God than industrious in his studies. His great humility is shown by a letter written shortly after his ordination, in which he says: "I, wretched worm that I am, who am but dust, dare I to touch Him who gave light to the sun and created the world? I receive Him daily, who exclaims: 'Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart,' (Matt. 11 : 29)—and yet, I continue in my haughtiness. I receive the light and the way and hear Him say: 'I am the way,'—and yet, I do not follow the way and do not flee from the world; the divine fire, that says: 'I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?' (Luke 12 : 49)—burns in my mouth and hands, and yet my breast remains cold."

Pope Julius II. appointed young Cajetan his Prothonotary, and the more his soul was united in divine love by his daily union with Christ in the Mass, the less he felt satisfied with his position in Rome. He, therefore resigned his office, returned to his native city Vicenza, and joined the brotherhood of St. Jerome. This step was regarded as disgraceful by his relatives, because this pious brotherhood was formed of persons of low birth. To serve and nurse the poor and sick, without shrinking from the most menial services, was now his principal aim and occupation, and the example set by a man of such illustrious descent, caused citizens and nobles to vie with each other in manifestations of charity.

Advised by his Confessor, Cajetan returned to Rome; and, while there, spent his days and nights in the service of religion, so that he was said to be an angel when at the altar, and an apostle when in the pulpit. It was at this time, that the Lord inspired him with the thought and desire of founding a religious order for the improvement of the priests and people. For that purpose, he united himself with several priests, similarly disposed; among whom was also the Archbishop of Theata, who resigned his See, in order to join the pious society which, in compliment to him was called the order of Theatines. The highest ecclesiastical tribunal hesitated to confirm their rule; for in their statutes they renounced all property, intending to live on voluntary contributions. But the Theatines maintained, that Christ and the apostles had never enjoyed revenues. The Archbishop employed all his possessions for charitable purposes, and said, he would make himself so poor that he would leave nothing to defray the expenses of his burial. The principal duties which the Theatines imposed upon themselves consisted in teaching the people, visiting the sick, caring for their spiritual welfare, and in influencing the clergy to fulfill the duties of their sacred office with zeal, free from motives of self-interest.

While Cajetan labored unceasingly for the welfare of his fellow-men, he also mortified his body with the most severe exercises of penance. Close watchfulness over himself, modesty, love of retirement, and contempt of all worldly affairs were such prominent features in his character that it became a proverb with the people to call Cajetans all such persons as were noted for great purity and modesty. If not obliged to speak, he was most sparing of his words, and especially so when obliged to converse with women: he especially avoided those who indulged in rich and elegant dress, and this fact was so generally known that women of the higher classes, when they sought his instruction or advice, laid aside their ornaments before they approached him.

St. Cajetan would say often: "The perishable riches of this world do not belong to man; but the invisible and eternal goods of heaven for which we were created, belong to us, and those we must strive to gain." Fortune, honors, and fame were looked upon by him as a smoke that dazzles and blinds the eyes of the mind. He did not like to be reminded of his noble descent, and when he visited Vicenza, his brothers could never prevail on him to stay with them in the palace of his father. He preferred the hospital, and spent his time in nursing the sick. While in Naples, several of his relatives arrived for the purpose of visiting him. They had not seen him for a long time, but when Cajetan heard that they had come in great pomp, as was then customary with nobles, he refused to receive them, and continued in his devotions before the crucifix.

Cajetan sometimes spent eight hours in prayer and contemplation before the Blessed Sacrament, and while he abhorred pomp and magnificence if manifesting the vanity of man, he delighted in seeing the house of God adorned in a manner worthy of the name of our Lord.

Not less great, however, than Cajetan's abhorrence for the display of worldly pomp, was also his zeal and love, wherever opportunity was offered, of assisting and saving his fellow-men in body and soul, and they gave him on that account the name of "hunter of souls." With words of eloquence and loving kindness he would exhort the sinner in the confessional, and succeeded always in leading him back to virtue.

The Theatines occupied a house situated on a hill in Rome, when the city was besieged and captured by the Constable of Bourbon. The soldiers ransacked the city, and committed all kinds of cruelties. During this season of affliction, when most of their supporters and benefactors had fled from the city, and others were themselves in great distress, the Theatines suffered great want. At last, the soldiers came also to their house, and finding there nothing to satisfy their desire for booty, they became enraged, and abused the priests. Among the soldiers was one who had served Cajetan before he renounced the world and his riches. He knew that Cajetan was then in Rome, and believing that he was still in possession of his property, and had money concealed, he went with his comrades to the Saint, and commanded him with loud threats to deliver up his gold. Cajetan told them that four years had elapsed since he had renounced his earthly possessions, and that he now lived in the greatest poverty. The wicked soldiers in their disappointment and rage tormented the saintly priest most cruelly and shamefully, so that Cajetan may justly be called a martyr of poverty. He and his brethren were even imprisoned to extort from them treasures which they neither possessed nor desired.

At last they were released, although not without paying a ransom. It happened that the officer in command of the building in which they were imprisoned, invited another officer to dinner, and while at table, the latter heard with astonishment several persons praying in an adjacent room. Having inquired who the persons were, and the cause of their imprisonment, he entreated the officer to set them free, and at last succeeded.

The Theatines then left the city of Rome, and established themselves in Venice, where they labored most devotedly in the service of charity while the inhabitants were suffering from a pestilential disease. Animated by the example of St. Cajetan, St. Jerome Emilian (see February 8) founded another religious society whose occupation was the education of orphans.

Carafa, formerly Archbishop of Theate, was Superior of the Theatines, and when by order of the Pope a Theatine convent was to be established in the city of Naples, he authorized St. Cajetan to take charge of the foundation, and allowed him to choose a companion. But the Saint replied: "I implore the Crucified to inspire you to select a companion for me who will least of all gratify my wish." His desire, however, was not granted; for the assistant given to him was a most pious and virtuous man.

After Cajetan had labored for many years with untiring zeal for God and

man, he fell dangerously sick in the city of Naples. His couch was a bag of straw, and the physician earnestly advised him to grant to his body, broken with age and fever, the comfort of a mattrass. But the sick Saint refused; on the contrary, he wished to die with Christ on the cross, as he had lived with Him on the cross, and demanded to be laid on the floor with nothing under him but the garment of a penitent covered with ashes. And thus stretched on the floor, he received his Saviour in the viaticum, and the Saviour received his soul in death.

BLESSED ALTMANN.

(August 8.)

Blessed Altmann was a canon of the Cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle and Confessor of the Empress Agnes. His piety led him in 1064 to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Owing to the great number then flocking there, under the idea that the end of the world was at hand, he suffered much, and his party was attacked by a band of Saracens, who robbed and most cruelly treated them. In order to show their contempt of Christianity, they placed themselves on the shoulders of the priests and pricked them with their spurs to make them run; Altmann and his companions, however, escaped alive and reached the Holy Land, whence, after having satisfied the yearnings of their hearts in the city of Jerusalem, they returned to their native country. The soul of blessed Altmann seems to have taken still deeper root in God, in consequence of the sufferings, religious exercises and pious meditations of his pilgrimage. At this time, blessed Altmann was chosen Bishop of Passaw and consecrated by St. Gebhard, Archbishop of Salzbourgh. The oldest biography we possess of blessed Altmann, says: "that he deserved this honor before God, was shown by his praiseworthy life; for he was a teacher of truth, devoted to charity, adorned with Christian virtues, and, therefore, agreeable to God and man. He exhorted the priests to love abstemiousness and instructed the people in the fear of God; by his efforts, enemies were reconciled and the poor in distress relieved; he mortified his body by fasting and watching, humbled himself in prayer and tears, and exemplified by living works his teachings and exhortations." And God also made manifest by a miracle, how greatly pleased He was with His holy servant. There was a woman in Passaw, whose only daughter was afflicted with leprosy. All natural remedies had been applied in vain, but imploring repeatedly in ardent prayer the assistance of the Lord, it was revealed

to her that she should wash her daughter with the water which Bishop Altmann used in the ablution after Mass. The woman did so, and her daughter was entirely freed from her disease.

The holy Bishop invited his priests to assemble in Passaw, held a council there, and read the decrees of the Pope, in which priests were commanded to live in a state of celibacy. These priests who had violated the discipline of the Church, declared that other Bishops had found no fault with their mode of life; but Altmann replied that he neither could, nor would, give his consent to any irregularities on the part of the clergy, because he would then be as guilty as they were. When blessed Altmann found that admonitions were vain, he resolved to use his authority as Bishop, and when, on the feast of St. Stephen, a great multitude had assembled at Passaw, among whom were the first men of the kingdom, he ascended the pulpit, and read publicly the pontifical decrees.

At that time Henry IV. was ruler of Germany; a wicked violent prince, who, to satisfy his passion, pillaged and devastated the Empire, exiled pious Bishops, setting in their places most wicked men. As Henry, instead of governing, was really destroying the Empire, Pope Gregory remonstrated with him; but the Emperor refusing to heed his advice, was excommunicated. Henry exiled the holy Bishop of Passaw and all good priests, so that Passaw became the seat of impiety and licentiousness.

During his exile Blessed Altmann visited Rome, where Pope Gregory received him most warmly, and then sent him to Germany as legate. Here the holy Bishop presided at several councils held by such Bishops as were true and faithful to the Church. Meanwhile two wicked and unscrupulous priests had filled the Episcopal chair of Passaw; one of whom, named Herman, ruled the diocese for two years, when death put an end to his administration; but before he died, he became penitent and asked pardon of the blessed Altmann.

In that part of the diocese which belonged to Austria, Bishop Altmann was enabled to administer his office, as the pious Margrave of Austria protected the holy Bishop. The monk, who wrote the life of blessed Altmann, fifty years after the Bishop's death, says:- "The uncultivated fields, that had been filled with thorns, were made fertile ground by Bishop Altmann; before his arrival nearly all the churches of the diocese were built of wood and were without ornaments; but by the zeal and energy of Bishop Altmann nearly all the churches are of stone, well provided with books, paintings and other ornaments, but especially with pious and well instructed priests. There are also many monasteries where God is worshiped day and night."

Blessed Altmann loved peace, but could not be induced by a weak love for peace to neglect his duty. On the death of a certain priest, his benefice, although it belonged to the church, had been seized by the priest's brother, a rich nobleman. The Bishop, as the Administrator of the Church-property, having used exhortation in vain, excommunicated the nobleman. On this all the pious,

especially the nobles avoided the guilty man, who, going to the Bishop on his knees, asked to be freed from the excommunication. Blessed Altmann willingly acceded to his request, as the nobleman restored the Church-property.

Blessed Altmann showed also the greatest willingness to apply all that he possessed to the support of the poor. When a famine was raging through his diocese, great crowds came to their spiritual father, who, filled with compassion, gave away all his furniture, and even sold his clothes, in order to assist the needy. After having faithfully administered his office for twenty-six years in spite of great opposition, Blessed Altmann was attacked by a fever, and expired on the 8th day of August, 1091.

BROTHER JOHN OF OLVERNEN.

(August 9.)

"Through Jesus Christ."

Brother John, who was one of the first companions of St. Francis, from his tender youth possessed great love for God; when thirteen he entered a convent of Friars Minor. When listening to the words of eternal truth, his heart melted like wax. He was zealous in attending to his duties; he waited upon the table, cooked the meals, was door-keeper, mended the garments of the brothers, and performed other works without being distracted in his meditations. God however visited him inwardly with many graces.

After a time the Lord withdrew his sensible graces, which he had possessed from his youth, and he remained poor and naked and, as it were, without love, without light, and filled only with great bitterness and anguish of spirit. He was grievously tormented and was much changed; he no longer found Him, whom his soul loved, to feel whose presence, to embrace whom was his delight. His desolation of soul lasted for some time. At length, filled with sadness he went into the woods to pray, and leaning against an oak he folded his hands, and lifted up his tearful eyes towards heaven, after the manner of one who seeks consolation, and behold, in this agony of his soul the Lord revealed himself. John falling down on his knees before Him and weeping, humbly asked His assistance.

While praying, John received wonderful grace from the Lord; he was entirely renewed and consoled in such a manner that he forget his former misery, and

was filled with such a sweet odor and with such light, that he fainted away. Of this odor he was often heard to say, that if all the sweet spices and balsams of the world were collected together, they would not compare to the heavenly fragrance that surrounded him. This odor and light remained with him for a long time in a perceptible manner. From the hour in which he had in spirit drunk from the fountain of living waters, he was not only strengthened in soul, but was also filled with the gift of wisdom, so that words of wonderful and supernatural eloquence flowed from his lips, the like of which was never heard before. The hearts of all who heard him were by his sermons incited to the love of God; he, an ignorant lay-brother, now preached before the Pope, the Cardinals and kings, before the learned and unlearned upon the most sublime subjects, so that every one was astonished at him.

Many other special graces were given to Brother John by the Saviour. In the convent of Magliano it once happened that Brother John rose early in the morning, and attended Mass as usual with the other brothers; but when Mass was ended, and they had all returned to their cells, he went into the garden, because he felt such an abundance of inward sweetness and emotion that he could hardly constrain himself. Enlightened by the Holy Ghost, he saw our Lord Jesus Christ with the eyes of his soul, and the great mystery was revealed to him how we all form one body in Christ. The mystery also was revealed to him, of which St. Paul says: "To be able to comprehend with all the Saints, what is the breath, and length, and height, and depth, to know also the charity of Christ which surpasseth all knowledge." (Eph. 3 : 18–19.)

At the dawn of the day he returned in the same spirit to the church, whither his duty called him, but as these interior emotions continued to grow stronger, he knew not what to do, for he found that he could not control his feelings, and he feared lest anything unusual should happen to him before the people, and he, therefore, prayed that God would moderate his joy; but notwithstanding all his efforts, he fainted away, so that all who ran to assist him thought that he was dead.

Not long before his death, Brother John saw our Saviour in human form, but as a despised and wretched man. When the good brother in astonishment said: "O my Lord, why dost Thou show Thyself to me in such misery and contempt?" he received the following answer: "I do not appear as wretched to thee, as I am despised in the hearts of Christians."

He predicted the hour of his death, and said to his brethren: "I will only remain a little while with you." In his last sickness his face became so convulsed that all who saw him were terrified; but soon after he looked up, and his face appeared like that of an Angel. When asked by one of his brethren the reason of the change, he said: "If I should tell you what I have seen, you would not understand me; but one thing I will tell you: 'He who wishes to be saved, must adhere with great love to Christ, the Crucified.'" After these

words he died in the Lord, on the ninth day of August, 1322, in the sixty-third year of his age.

ST. LAWRENCE.

(August 10.)

'Christian Charities.'

In the time of the pagan Emperor Valerian, St. Sixtus was Pope, and had on account of the great piety of St. Lawrence who was a poor boy, instructed him himself, and then made him Deacon. The pagan government hoped to effect the destruction of Christianity by putting to death the pastors of the Church. Sixtus was seized, and on his way to the place of execution, St. Lawrence followed, weeping bitterly; he lamented, and wept, not because Sixtus had to suffer martyrdom, but, on the contrary, because he was to be separated from him, and could not die with his spiritual father for Christ's sake. He said to Sixtus: "Whence goest thou, father, without thy son? Whither goest thou, holy priest, without thy deacon? Leave me not behind, holy father." Sixtus answered: "I do not leave thee behind, my son, but greater combats await thee for the belief in Christ." The holy Pope was then nailed to the cross, but here also the faithful youth forsook him not. Sixtus, enlightened from above when hanging on the cross, prophesied that after three days he would be united with him. As soon as the holy Deacon had received this assurance from the lips of the Christian high-priest, he assembled the poor from all parts, and divided among them all the money belonging to the Church of which he had charge; he even sold the precious vessels used for divine service, and divided the price among the poor, fearing lest all might be seized by the persecutors.

These charities, no doubt, caused the pagan judges to call upon Lawrence, hoping thereby to obtain possession of rich treasures, and when Lawrence appeared, the judge commanded him to deliver up the money and treasures of the Church; he further declared that it was known that the priests of the Christians used for divine service vessels of gold and silver, and that they had costly candlesticks; that the God of the Christians had not brought money into the world, but words; they should, therefore, be satisfied with the words, and give up the money. Lawrence acknowledged that the Church was rich, possessing even greater treasures than the Emperor himself, and that he was willing to show them to the judge, if time was allowed him to put them in order, which was granted.

Lawrence now made haste to gather together all the poor who had received their support from the Church, and they numbered about fifteen hundred. He assembled them in the church, and wrote down their names. St. Augustine says that Lawrence had asked the judge for several wagons in order to place therein the treasures of the church, and that the wagons were cheerfully sent. With all these poor persons Lawrence went to the judge, who asked in astonishment why he had brought so many persons with him, and where were the promised treasures. The holy Deacon pointed to the poor, saying: "There are the riches and treasures of the Church; for their support and clothing the property of the Church was used, and having thus applied it in a manner pleasing to God, it can never be taken away."

There are persons who give cheerfully and liberally, towards the decoration of a church, and many take a special pleasure in embroidering or making wreaths of flowers for that purpose, which is indeed good and praise-worthy; but it sometimes happens, that those who do this, are not at the same time kind to the poor. Such conduct is unchristian; for which is more worthy, the living Christian or the dead church walls? St. Bernard in reference to this, says: "The church walls are richly adorned, but her poor starve; the stones are ornamented with gold, while the children of the poor are naked." The true Christian recognizes in his neighbor a brother and a member of the body of Christ; he will, therefore, take into consideration not only the wants of the church but the necessities of his fellow-creatures. You can give alms, dear reader, and make it a truly Christian charity by providing for those, who cannot go to church on Sundays and festivals, because they have not decent clothes to wear: you can buy garments for a poor child who is about to make its first communion, and in such and other ways, you have it in your power to do much good. Indeed, every gift which you present to the poor, by telling them that God gives it to them through you, and that they should thank and praise the Lord for it, is truly a Christian gift.

Let us, however, return to St. Lawrence. The avaricious Judge was greatly incensed at being insulted and cheated as he thought, by the holy servant of God, and as he could not obtain the wished for treasures, he attempted to deprive him of his faith; for he commanded him to deny Christ and endeavored to force him to do so, by scourging him; but when he found that his efforts were fruitless, he had the pious youth placed upon a gridiron, and had a great fire made beneath it, in order to put him slowly to death.

But now was shown the great firmness of a soul, strengthened by the Holy Ghost. Instead of lamenting and groaning at the terrible pain he suffered, Lawrence exhibited a wonderful composure, and even spoke cheerfully. After having remained quietly for sometime upon the gridiron, he said to the Judge: "Turn me over, for I am roasted enough on this side." Afterwards he said: "Now you can eat of my flesh, if you wish, for it is well roasted. The soul of

the holy martyr was then occupied by the thought of God; he prayed with great fervor, that Rome, at that time the capital of the world, might embrace the Christian faith, so that the Gospel might from thence reach all nations. One of the most ancient writers (St. Prudentius) ascribes the conversion of Rome to this prayer, which St. Lawrence offered up in blood, fire and spirit. Several of the Senators, who saw how a man could suffer the greatest bodily pains by fire, but who had heaven in his soul, were converted to Christianity on the spot. The Christians beheld the face of the holy martyr shining resplendently and perceived an extraordinarily sweet odor emitted from his body. The executioners turned him from one side to another, in order to increase his sufferings, but his blessed soul departed to bliss, as two centuries before that of his fellow-deacon, St. Stephen preceded him. As the souls of these two glorious men are certainly united before the throne of God, in the same manner should their relics be united in this world. The relics of St. Stephen were brought to Rome by the Emperor Theodosius, and it was decided to lay them beside the relics of St. Lawrence. The relics also of St. Justin (June 1st) are deposited under the same altar in the church of St. Lawrence

The Saint was honored in an unusual manner by both God and man, and many miracles were performed through the intercession of St. Lawrence. St. Augustine says: "Who has ever asked anything on his grave without having obtained what he prayed for? By his merits many weak persons have received temporal goods which he himself despised, not that they should be persuaded to remain in their weakness, but that the small favors which were granted them, might induce them to desire and ask for greater ones." This may be also the reason why this Saint has been especially venerated from the earliest times until the present day, and not only are several churches built in Rome in his honor, but his feast is celebrated with an Octave.

ST. RUSTICULA (MARCIA.)

(August 11.)

"Sorrow changed into Joy."

St. Rusticula was born in Provence, France, and lost her father the very day she was born, and shortly after her brother also. The unprotected mother soon after met with another misfortune; her only child was stolen from her by a knight on account, no doubt, of the great riches which she was to inherit. The knight entrusted the child to his housekeeper, and determined to marry

her as soon as she had attained the proper age. The affair, however, was brought before the king, and the knight was compelled to give up the child, who was then placed under the charge of St. Liliola, Abbess of the convent of Arles.

The pious virgin became such an extraordinary example of all the virtues that, after the death of St. Liliola, she was unanimously chosen Abbess. Rusticula knew the holy Scriptures by heart, and was so strict with herself that she frequently fasted for three days, and spent many nights in the church. The Lord glorified his zealous servant even during her life by miracles. Once, when washing her face in the presence of Sister Onoridia, the sister saw the face of the Abbess shining like the sun, and became so terrified that she ran out of the room. Rusticula following, asked her why she fled; for she herself knew not that the love of God with which she was filled, had shown itself even in a perceptible manner. One night, when Rusticula was asleep, a virgin appeared to her, and, touching her side, said: "Do you sleep, Marcia? I have come to tell you that, as soon as your spirit leaves your body, you will be united with me and with the other virgins who have followed the Lord. I am Lucia who was put to death for the name of the Lord." Once when Rusticula remained in the church during dinner-time, she heard a voice, saying: "Marcia, imitate your Master, who exclaimed on the cross: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;' and St. Stephen also, who was stoned to death by the Jews, spoke the same words." Rusticula wondered what this meant, but she was destined soon to know.

After the death of Theodoric Clotaire II., a neighboring prince took possession of the kingdom, and wished to put to death the sons of the deceased king; the third one, Childebert, escaped. Two noblemen, incited by Satan, falsely accused the blessed Abbess before Clotaire of having concealed the prince in her convent. Clotaire, burning with rage, commanded one of the accusers, Prince Riccimir, to investigate the case strictly. This wicked man, however, without trying to discover the truth, sent word to the king that the abbess was guilty. The king believed the slanderer, and sent an officer of high rank to Arles with orders to bring the abbess before him; but Rusticula refused to leave the convent, for, according to her rule, no sister was allowed to leave its precincts. The officer called upon the governor of the city to deliver up the abbess to him, as it would cost him his life to disobey the command of the king. Winfid, for this was the name of the governor, held the servant of God in great veneration, and with tears implored her to give herself up willingly, for he was ready to shed his blood with hers. She then gave herself up, and was confined in another convent.

After having spent some days in prison, she was carried off, but God again came to her assistance, for the blessed Bishop of Vienne went before the king, and charging him with having unjustly condemned a servant of God, told him that in punishment of this offence he would very soon lose his son by death.

The king, terrified at this prophecy, sent two pious men to bring the Abbess with all respect into his presence. While Rusticula was on her way to Vienne, a miraculous cure was performed through her intercession, and when she appeared before the king, he was not only confounded by the report of the miracle, but also by her looks, and received her with the greatest veneration. When asked if the accusations against her were true, she said that she had never dreamt of committing such an act. The king, however, was still in doubt, when at once the death of his son was announced to him. The terrified king was now in great haste to release the servant of God in order that no greater misfortune might befall him. When the news came that Rusticula would return, priests, laymen, nobles, and citizens, poor and rich, were filled with joy, and gave thanks to God that the Abbess, who had prayed so often and with such wonderful success for others, was now restored to them by the assistance of God.

The sisters of the convent received their spiritual mother with hymns of praise. Rusticula, surrounded by the choir of virgins, also thanked God, and then her spiritual daughters whose prayers had effected her happy release. Not long after, the malicious men who had falsely accused the servant of Christ, came, and humbly asked her pardon. Rusticula received them as kindly as if they had bestowed upon her nothing but love and honor.

Be comforted, therefore, dear reader, in every tribulation, and consider that it is perhaps a preparation for great joy. It is a special decree of divine Providence that if every sorrow is not changed into joy in this world, it will be surely in the next, that is to say, if we bear it with Christian fortitude.

Rusticula attained the age of seventy-seven, and in 632, after having fought valiantly against the snares of Satan, she was finally called to the heavenly abode in order to receive the reward of her long and faithful services. It had always been her endeavor not to burthen those under her care with too much labor, nor to allow them too much ease, in order that discipline might be preserved.

It is wonderful how much the blessed Abbess accomplished, seeing that no day passed in which she was not afflicted with some pain. The sisters, although coming from different countries, felt the greatest love for their spiritual mother, for Rusticula shared all their joys and sorrows. When assembled in the chapel, the Abbess was accustomed to refresh their hearts with divine instruction. "It cannot be described," says her biographer, "with what sweetness and lovely compassion she would admonish the sisters, not showing herself as their Superior, but rather as their mother. Even when death approached, she ceased not to recommend to God her spiritual daughters, whom she left as orphans."

ST. CLARE.

(August 12.)

"Clearness."

ST. PAUL writes in his Epistle to the Galatians (5 : 24): "And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences." Now what does it mean to crucify the flesh with the vices and concupiscences? The life of St. Clare is the best answer that we can give.

Clare was born at Assisi of noble parents, endowed with extraordinary beauty and unusual talent; the world with all its pleasures and delights was open to her, yet she led an innocent and pious life from her early youth. Having heard St. Francis preach, she resolved to devote herself to the service of God, and sought an interview with St. Francis to ask his advice. He soon discovered that she was chosen by Almighty God to become a pattern of Christian perfection to the female sex, and, therefore, encouraged her to renounce the world.

Although her parents were very pious, they preferred that their daughter Clare should marry a man of high position who had asked her hand; but Clare endeavored to prepare her parents gradually for the step she was about to take; she frequently spoke of the advantages of seclusion, of the happiness of a soul renouncing all temporal glory, and giving itself entirely to God. She was afraid to say more, and so prevent by rashness the execution of her purpose. Early one morning she went with a friend and relative to the church where St. Francis already expected her. After Mass, St. Clare went up to the altar, prostrated herself, and asked for the habit of a nun in order to follow Christ. St. Francis having remained silent for some moments, addressed the virgin, and told her that the riches she now willingly gave up, would be lost one day by the people of the world against their will; that the peace she now would gain by making the sacrifice, would excel all the pleasures of the world. The Holy Ghost was then invoked, and the virgin divested herself of her head ornaments, unbound her hair, and asked to have it cut off; she then laid aside her beautiful dress, and put on a coarse habit which she girded about her waist with a cord. St. Francis led the virgin, now dedicated to God, into the convent of the Benedictine sisters, until divine Providence manifested her future destiny.

The world, and even her parents considered this step as very imprudent and censurable. Her father was determined to take her out of the convent by force; but the daughter clinging to the altar with both hands, exclaimed: "No, my Lord and God, I will never leave Thee; I will for the future live for Thee alone!" This heroic firmness of the young virgin made a deep impression upon the father, but his anger could not be appeased.

Clare distinguished herself in a short time by her great piety, so that she

became an object of admiration and wonder not only in the convent, where the true spirit of religion was reigning, but to the inhabitants of the city also, who had great confidence in her, and many persons continually came to ask her prayers and advice. Clare, however, was very much displeased that she was so much thought of by the people of the world, and when she could not escape, she gave a short answer, but at the same time she edified them the more by her modesty and the divine serenity of her countenance.

Agnes, who frequently visited her sister Clare, felt within her a growing desire to dedicate in a like manner her life to God, and as she knew she could never obtain the consent of her parents, she left without saying a word. The father, in consequence, became so furious that in company with some relatives he went to the convent, resolved to bring back his daughter. Agnes, although but fourteen years old, made such resistance that one of the noblemen struck her upon the face, so that she fell fainting to the ground; he then seized her by the hair of the head, and commanded the others to assist him in dragging her away, and notwithstanding the tears and entreaties of Clare, her sister was forcibly carried off. They, however, had not yet reached the city, when the young man found it impossible to carry her any further, for she appeared to be made of stone, whereupon Monaldo, her own uncle, became so enraged that he drew his dagger to stab her; but suddenly his arm became stiff, so that in his terror he asked forgiveness of Agnes, imploring her at the same time to pray for him, when at once her prayers were heard.

The men now left Agnes, and St. Clare, who had followed them, raised her sister up from the ground. Agnes, however, felt happy that she was allowed to suffer for the name of Jesus, and thus the two pious virgins returned to the convent. St. Francis, having now two holy persons by whose assistance he could establish his order for the female sex, transferred them to a house outside of the city, and many women and virgins of every age applied for admission in order to lead a life of penance under the direction of St. Clare. St. Francis, who had made St. Clare Abbess against her wish, instructed her to practice always the strictest poverty, to be kind to the other sisters, and to show them by her example the shortest way of attaining virtue.

It soon became necessary to found more convents for sisters, and although the rules were very severe, St. Clare even exceeded them in mortifying herself. During Lent she lived on bread and water; thrice in the week she ate nothing during the whole day; her bed was the floor, her pillow a piece of wood or a foggot; she slept very little, and broke in upon her hours of rest to pray or perform some penance. When remonstrated with, she replied: "O my sisters, I cannot forget what Almighty God has done for me, and I am ashamed of myself for having done so little for him as yet; I will not die any sooner than it is the will of God that I should die. Many worldlings who will not deny themselves anything, and who live in the indulgence of sensuality and pleasures, will

die before me; I, on the contrary, will see death approach without fear; I will even meet it with joy, for I will go to Him whom I adore and love." St. Francis and the Bishop of Assisi both forbade her to sleep on the bare floor, or to go whole days without taking any nourishment.

After some time a famine occurred, and it was only natural that the convent, living on the contributions of others, should also be in want of provisions. It happened that one day they only had half a loaf of bread. The holy Abbess, filled with the spirit of Christ, brought it into the refectory, and having pronounced the blessing over it, divided it into fifty parts, giving a piece to each sister. When all had partaken of it, and were satisfied, several persons could have had their hunger appeased with what was left.

The great uncertainty of supporting so many sisters by voluntary contributions, caused two Popes to advise St. Clare to change the rule of the order, so that henceforth the convent should be permitted to possess property; but St. Clare entreated Pope Innocent IV. to leave things as they were; "*For*," said she, "*the Lord has shown even in a wonderful manner how much we can trust in Him, and should we now commence to be distrustful of Him? I fervently beseech you, Holy Father, and shall not rise from the floor, until you have granted me my petition to let us remain without property, and in perfect poverty.*"

Although a woman, she possessed extraordinary wisdom and presence of mind. Even St. Francis, her teacher and master, was so much convinced of the supernatural wisdom of St. Clare that he would often ask her advice. The Saint was in doubt as to whether he should continue to preach or retire from the world, and lead a life of prayer and contemplation, and he applied to St. Clare for counsel. The saintly Abbess was surprised at such humility, and confounded by the confidence thus placed in her. According to the wish of St. Francis, she, together with the most humble and pious sisters, commenced to pray that God would reveal his will to her. While praying, she remembered the great effects produced by the sermons of St. Francis, the great miracles which accompanied them, and the numerous invitations from Bishops to preach, and recognizing in all this true and evident signs, she sent word to him, saying: "Go, preach the Gospel to every creature, and words of wisdom and eloquence will be given you from above."

A fountain of good counsel to others, St. Clare sought advice from the Crucified; she frequently held up the crucifix to the sisters, saying: "Behold, my sisters, the overflowing treasure where I seek help when in need; when sad and weary, the crucifix strengthens me; when in doubt and confusion, it enlightens me; when disheartened, it gives me courage; when afflicted and weeping, it dries up my tears; in darkness it is my light, in timidity and fear my hope and my support, in sickness and pain my relief. And I hope that this holy sign shall defend me on my death-bed against any invisible enemy, and that one day it may be my consolation and joy before my eternal Judge."

At that time Frederic II. was spreading great terror among the inhabitants of Italy; with an immense army he marched through Italy, burned cities, devastated fields, robbed churches and convents, and left nothing but destruction and ruin after him. A company of his licentious soldiers during the night climbed upon the walls, and had reached the doors of the convent when the sisters fled screaming to the bed of their sick Abbess, who alone remained quiet. She offered up her prayers to heaven, and had herself carried to the entrance of the convent, some say with the Blessed Sacrament in her hands, for which reason she is also thus represented in her picture, when suddenly the soldiers were seized with a mysterious fear; an invisible power put them to flight; they separated, not knowing whither to go, and convent and city were saved.

It was her greatest happiness to visit the Blessed Sacrament, and she advised all the sisters to do the same.

St. Clare before her death had to suffer much; but even then she did not lose her meekness and serenity, nor cease her austerities. Pope Innocent IV. accompanied by four Cardinals, came to see her in the convent when he heard that her illness was dangerous. The Pope was so impressed with her holiness that, turning to those who were present, he said aloud: "How happy would I be if my soul was as pure before the eyes of God as is the soul of this saintly daughter!"

Although rejoiced at having received general absolution from the Vicar of Christ, her heavenly and enlightened soul was more rejoiced and thankful for the infinitely greater honor of having received on the same morning holy Communion. When the Pope had left, she said: "How great, how glorious is this day for me! O my sisters, how good and merciful is God! I have to-day received the King of kings; He, who dwells in heaven, came to be united with me, a poor creature! I, who am only misery and dust, have received Him, whom heaven and earth cannot contain!"

As her last hour drew near, she had the Passion of Christ read, gave her blessing to the sisters, and died at the age of sixty, pressing the crucifix to her lips.

ST. RADEGUNDIS.

(August 13.)

"Venial Sin."

As a general rule servants do not command respect from the people of the world, but, nevertheless, a poor and simple servant may, by a pious and virtuous life, be more in the sight of God and the heavenly spirits than kings and emperors with all their power and glory. The world has often been obliged to venerate after death those who in life filled the humblest stations.

In the year 1691, the body of St. Radegundis was magnificently adorned, and carried in solemn procession to the church where it was placed before the high altar. When in the year 1703 Augsburg was besieged, the body of St. Radegundis was for safety brought into the city, and confided to the Oratorians. After the war, in the year 1705, on the third Sunday after Pentecost, it was solemnly carried back, and deposited in the crypt of her church, where the relics of this Saint are still visited and venerated.

St. Radegundis was, when alive, nothing but a poor servant; she was born in a village near Augsburg, and entered the service of the prince of Wellenburg; she was perfectly contented with her condition, convinced that God had placed her in it knowing that she could thus best save her soul.

She performed her work with great cheerfulness and fidelity, according to the words of St. Paul: "Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh, not serving to the eye, as pleasing men, but in simplicity of heart, fearing God." (Col. 3 : 22) Radegundis sanctified her work by a good intention, and, therefore, all her actions were of great worth before the Almighty. She also proved by her life that whoever truly loves God, will love his neighbor also. Not far from the castle of Wellenburg was a hospital filled with lepers. Lepers are horribly deformed, the body, and especially the face, is distorted and swollen, the color of the face is leaden, and their sores emit a disgusting odor; the nails and hair fall, ulcers appear, and the flesh drops off from the bones. This horrible disease is contagious, for which reason Moses commanded lepers to be separated from others. Radegundis, as often as she could find time, went to nurse these afflicted creatures in the hospital, and was very anxious for their salvation. The pious servant taught them how to examine their conscience, how to have sorrow for their sins, to love God and confide in Jesus Christ, and her words were the more effective since they found Radegundis to be the most perfect model of a true Christian who, out of her limited means, did all that she could for their comfort. It once happened that Radegundis, when carrying some food to the hospital, was met by her master, the prince, and having been accused before by other servants of robbing him in order to give to the poor,

the prince, filled with suspicion, asked her what she had in her basket. In the sudden fear of being reproached, she told an untruth, saying that she had nothing in it but a comb and some soap to cleanse the sick. Radegundis in this manner escaped the reproach or the punishment of her master, but not the punishment of God; for some time after, as she passed through the forest lying between the castle and the hospital, she was attacked by wolves, and her flesh dreadfully torn. She stayed away so long that her master became anxious, and sent two servants to search for her, who found her at last half dead, and weltering in her blood; she was then carried home, but died after three days, and was buried near the hospital. She was soon venerated as a Saint, and a chapel was built over her.

The accident that happened to Radegundis was considered as a punishment for the untruth which she told her master. Pope Gregory mentions a similar case which is related in the Third Book of Kings, Thirteenth Chapter; therein it is said that a Prophet of Juda was once persuaded in opposition to the command of God, to eat bread and drink water in the land to which he was sent to announce the curse of God. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying: "Thy dead body shall not be brought into the sepulchre of thy fathers." (Vers 22.) When the Prophet had heard these words, and had left, a lion found him in the way, and killed him; and his body was cast in the way, and the lion and the ass stood by the body. The lion had not eaten of the dead body, nor had he hurt the ass. St. Gregory makes the following remark on the above, saying: "The sin of disobedience was by death both atoned for and forgiven; this was shown by the fact that the same lion who dared to kill the living, dared not to touch him when dead; for he who was permitted to kill, was not permitted to eat of the dead body, because he who was in life guilty of disobedience, became justified by suffering death." In a similar manner St. John Cassian says: "We know also that holy men have been in their body delivered up to Satan or to terrible diseases for having committed some venial sins; for divine mercy does not wish to find the least stain in them on that terrible day of judgment, and cleanses their soul even in the world from the least defect, in order that they may be received into a happy eternity. We see the truth of this shown in the man of God who, on account of having been once disobedient, not out of malice, but by being deceived, was killed by a lion."

If, therefore, such holy persons as this Prophet, Moses, and St. Radegundis are punished in this world so severely on account of a venial sin, we must say then with St. Peter: "If the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly appear?" (1 Pet. 4 : 19.) We may at the same time consider how much and how severely those will be punished in purgatory, who, although they avoid mortal sins, are not afraid to commit venial sins; for even one venial sin is a horror, and a great evil before the infinitely holy God.

ST. ATHANASIA.

(August 14.)

Beauty of Virtue."

A THOUSAND years ago there lived on the island of Egina a pious couple named Nicetas and Irene. Their daughter, Athanasia, was so highly gifted that when but seven years old, she read the holy Scriptures, and knew the Psalms by heart. Despising the pleasures of the world, she resolved to enter a convent; but her parents forced her to marry. She lived but sixteen days with her husband who lost his life in an incursion made by some African Corsairs. Athanasia, again free, prepared to enter a convent, when suddenly a decree of the Emperor Michael commanded virgins and widows, who had not attained a certain age, to marry men of their own nationality, the emperor wishing thereby to effect an increase of population in his empire. Athanasia was thus forced to submit to the will of her parents, as they wished her to marry again.

Athanasia, having lived for some time with her husband, persuaded him to renounce the world, and to enter a convent, where, after having lived a holy life, he died in the Lord. Athanasia then divided all her possessions among the poor, and united herself with some other pious persons for the purpose of leading a life of seclusion. Chosen Superior by the others, she would never allow them to wait upon her, on the contrary, she desired to be the servant of all. A word of reproach never passed her lips, although in presiding over the convent she was obliged to hear many evil reports concerning herself. On Easter only would she allow herself some cheese and fish, and in Lent she only ate every second day. Her bed consisted of stones upon which was spread a small rough cover; her under-garment was made of hair, over which she wore a woolen dress.

Athanasia, having spent four years with her companions, felt impelled to retire to a more distant place in order to be even more aloof from the world, and found such a place where, as formerly, she practiced humility and meekness. One day, when performing her devotions, with her eyes raised towards heaven, she saw a shining cloud surrounding a man whose countenance was full of glorious beauty. Athanasia had frequently had visions, but she had never before seen one of this kind. Meditating upon what she had seen, she seemed to hear a voice saying: "The man whose beauty you so much admire, received his glory from having been humble and meek, and because you are striving to obtain the same virtues, know then that you will one day appear in the same splendor." In consequence of this revelation, Athanasia endeavored the more to possess these two virtues, and not the least sign of anger or pride was ever seen in her.

A celebrated heathen (Plato) has said: "If we could see the form of virtue, every one would be induced to love it on account of its inexpressible beauty." Although we cannot see virtue with the eyes of our body, as Athanasia saw the beauty of humility and meekness, we can in imagination form some conception of its beauty. Do you not, dear reader, admire the FIDELITY of a servant, who refuses to leave a family which has lost all its property, and who even by the work of her own hands aids in its support? Do you not admire CHARITY if the daughter of a rich and noble family nurses a poor sick beggar-woman, and attends to her wants until death relieves her from sorrow? In such a manner every virtue is beautiful, and its beauty becomes in some measure visible at the moment when it is practiced.

When Athanasia was one day absorbed in devotion, a man afflicted with almost complete blindness came to her, and asked her intercession. In her modesty she consoled him, telling him that she had also suffered from the same evil, and that he should have patience, Almighty God would soon help him. The sick man, however, not satisfied with her advice, insisted that she could help him with her prayers. The Saint then laid her hand upon his eyes, saying: "May Christ, who cured the man born blind, grant thee, brother, deliverance from thy evil." The moment that she uttered those words, the man received his sight. Athanasia was obliged to visit Constantinople, because Theodora, the mother of the emperor, had a great desire to know her. What a worldly-minded person would have considered a great happiness, was for St. Athanasia a tribulation; for while at the imperial court she longed for the seclusion of her convent, and soon after her return was attacked by a fatal illness. On the fourteenth of August, feeling the approach of death, she told the sisters not to omit for her death any part of the solemn celebration of the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and not to pay the last respects to her body till after the feast. She then died happy in the Lord. Soon after two sisters, when in the church, saw the same vision; they beheld two men in shining garments, who led Athanasia to the altar where they clothed her with a royal mantle, adorned with pearls and precious stones, put a crown upon her head, placed a sceptre in her hands, and at the same time they heard a voice from the place where St. Athanasia was buried.

When at the anniversary of her death the grave and coffin was opened, the body of the Saint emitted the sweetest odor, and looked as fresh as if it had been alive; even the eyes preserved their brilliant expression. A great many miracles are related to have happened by the intercession of St. Athanasia.

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

(August 15.)

THIS feast is the most exalted and glorious celebrated in honor of the most blessed Mother of our Lord; for it reminds us of the glory to which she was elevated by her divine Son Jesus Christ after she had ended her holy life here below, and that, now seated upon a throne, and united with Him as Queen of heaven, she is venerated by all who with faithful hearts recognize and worship her divine Son. Even in the earliest times our holy Church celebrated this day with an Octave, reminding us as it does of the glory attained by the most Blessed Virgin, and it is regarded as one of her highest festivals.

The holy fathers of the Church manifest in their writings how greatly they rejoiced in the glory of the Blessed Mother of our Lord, and frequently admonish the faithful to celebrate this day with holy reverence and joy. Thus St. Augustine, in the sermon he preached on the Assumption, says: "Beloved brethren! the glorious day has arrived that surpasses all the feasts of the Saints, a most solemn day when, as we believe, the holy Virgin was received from this mortal life into the glory of heaven. Therefore, the whole world shall exult and rejoice in her assumption; for it would be wrong if the greatest festival of her through whom the author of the world became our Saviour, should pass without being honored." St. John of Damascus says: "To-day the holy and living ark of the covenant of the living God which has received its creator, rests in the temple of the Lord which is not built by the hand of man. David, her ancestor, exults, and all the choirs and degrees of Angels surround her with him, celebrating, rejoicing, exulting, praising, and proclaiming her glory. The heavenly paradise of the new Adam, free from every curse in which is planted the tree of life, and our (spiritual) nakedness covered, this paradise is to-day exalted into the abodes of everlasting life. To-day the immaculate Virgin, free from every earthly passion, and filled with heavenly joy, has not turned into dust and ashes, but she herself being a living heaven, has been received into the abodes of heaven."

According to the Christian tradition the most Blessed Virgin, after the ascension of her divine Son, lived with St. John the Apostle, to whom our Saviour, shortly before his death, had commended her as His mother, and who from that hour took her to his own house in Jerusalem, (John 19 : 26–27) to the joy and comfort of the faithful, who greatly venerated her as the Mother of their Lord, and as a supporter of the Church, just then in its infancy. Her presence was to the faithful a substitute for the former bodily presence of the Saviour. She was, to use the words of a learned writer, a model to the Apostles, and a

teacher to the teachers of the Church. She, who had carefully preserved in her heart all that had happened to her divine Son from the moment of His incarnation, undoubtedly informed the Evangelist St. Luke of the many and important incidents which he relates of the early youth of Jesus and His great precursor, St. John.

After the ascension of Jesus, the most Blessed Virgin had certainly no greater desire than that of leaving this world, and of being united in heavenly bliss with her beloved Son, and if her former life had been a heavenly one, all the thoughts of her mind, and all the wishes of her heart were now turned where she knew her divine Son Jesus Christ to be, in the majesty of the Father! Yet, notwithstanding her infinite longing to be with her divine Son, submitting to the holy will of God, to whom she, as an humble servant of the Lord, had always sacrificed her own will, she still remained after the ascension of Jesus for a long time on earth, bearing with a firm heart the trials to which the Lord subjected her. One of the most painful for her to bear was the cruel persecution incited by the Jews against the Christian community shortly after the descent of the Holy Ghost, which persecution disturbed her holy spirit, and for that reason she, with St. John, left the city of Jerusalem. and sought refuge in Ephesus until the persecution abated.

When the Apostles, according to the command of our Saviour, went to all parts of the world to preach the Gospel to all creatures, Mary returned to Jerusalem; for her heart could not bear to stay long away from the sanctified place where her divine Son had lived, labored, and suffered; where He had died and risen from the dead, and where He had sent down the Holy Ghost upon her, and upon the other disciples.

At last, in the fifty-seventh year after the birth of Jesus, that is twenty-three years after His ascension, and when she had reached the seventy-second year of her age, the long wished for time of her death approached. According to tradition, the same Angel of the Lord, Gabriel, who had before announced to her the birth of her divine Son, now appeared, and revealed to her the day and hour of her death. As she was free from original sin, and never had committed actual sin, she might have remained free from death, which is the punishment of sin, and, according to the Bible: "*Passed over all men, because all have sinned in one (Adam).*" (Rom. 5 : 12.) But like her divine Son Jesus Christ, who voluntarily submitted to the law of death to procure thereby for man life everlasting, His blessed mother, His most faithful follower, wished to submit to that law. St. John of Damascus says: "Why should death overcome her who was to all of us a source of life? Yet in humility she submits to the general law of her Son, and, a daughter of Adam, she suffers his punishment. She suffers the punishment of Adam in order that she, the mother of the living God, might be received into heaven with greater glory."

According to tradition, the most Blessed Virgin, at the time when she closed

her earthly course, lived in the venerable house in which our Saviour with His disciples had partaken of the Last Supper, at the same time instituting the most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, and in which the Holy Ghost had descended upon the Apostles. When it became known that the Mother of our Lord was about to depart this life to share the glory of her divine Son, the hearts of all the faithful in Christ were filled with sadness and joy; with sadness at the thought that their beloved mother, their comfort and support, would soon leave them, and with joy, because they knew that she would be henceforth their continual and mighty mediator with her divine Son. Following St. Dionysius, St. John of Damascus thus describes her last moments:

"By an old and venerable tradition we are informed that all the Apostles who were still living, with the exception of St. Thomas, were with the mother of God in her last hours. As the moment approached when she yielded up her blessed soul into the hands of her divine Son, who appeared with the choirs of the Angels, and surrounded by the numberless hosts of the holy inhabitants of heaven, wonderful hymns were heard, and a celestial light filled the apartment of the most Blessed Virgin to which, loudly weeping, all the Christians of Jerusalem crowded to see for the last time their beloved mother and mistress. Numberless sick and blind persons, and many who were otherwise afflicted, among them unconverted Jews, were instantly cured as soon as they entered the holy place. Three days after the bereaved Apostles had buried the holy body, St. Thomas arrived, and he was sorely grieved when he heard that the blessed ark of the covenant in which the Son of the Almighty had dwelt, had been consigned to the grave. In the desolation of his heart he besought the other Apostles to open the grave where her holy body was laid, so that he might once more look upon her countenance, beaming with love. They granted his prayer; but when the grave was opened, it was discovered that the body had disappeared, and they found only the winding sheets in which it had been wrapped, and which filled the air with an odor of indescribable sweetness. Greatly astonished at this wonderful mystery they closed the grave, and could only think that it had pleased the Lord of glory, who had preserved the virginity of His mother even after His birth, to preserve also her spotless body and to honor it, even before the time of the general resurrection, by receiving it into the heavenly abodes of bliss."

The opinions of the most celebrated teachers of the Church are in harmony with this tradition, and it is the pious belief of the whole Church that, though the most Blessed Virgin died a natural death, still her body had not seen corruption in the grave, but that, awakened from the grave by the power of the God-man who has risen and ascended into heaven, the most blessed Mother of God was received into heaven with her body glorified; for the pious faithful in Christ cannot presume that the holy body which had brought forth the Saviour of the world, and from which He, the Almighty Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, had assumed flesh, should have become dust. "Who would dare to assert,"

St. Augustine says, "that the blessed body in which Jesus Christ assumed flesh, was given as food to the worms?" And thus also St. John of Damascus: "Eve who listened to the seduction of the serpent, is punished with pain and death, and must enter the abodes of death; but this truly Blessed Virgin who listened to the word of the Lord, who was filled with the effect of grace of the Holy Ghost, who, by the salutation of the Archangel, without sensual affection, and without intercourse with a man, conceived the Son of God, and brought Him forth without pain, and who entirely devoted herself to God, how could death devour her? How could the grave hold her? How could corruption attack the body in which life was conceived? A road to heaven, straight, even, and free from obstacles, was prepared for her; for if Christ says: '*Where I am, there also shall my servant be,*' how much the more will His mother be with Him!"

How glorious must have been the entrance of the most Blessed Virgin into the kingdom of her divine Son? With what joy must the blessed inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem have met their glorified Queen, and with what honors must her divine Son Jesus Christ have distinguished her whom He, in His earthly life, had honored as His mother! St. Bernard says: "*If eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him,*' (1 Cor. 2 : 9) who then shall be able to explain or comprehend what He assigned to His mother, who loved Him more than all men, and who was loved by Him more than all the rest?" And if, like her divine Son, she already manifested so great love and care for the welfare of her fellow-men, and procured them by her powerful influence with Jesus Christ such great and miraculous gifts of grace when still living on earth, how much more will she now, united in the glory of heaven with her divine Son, employ her compassion so full of love, and her influence, so powerful with the King of Majesty, for the welfare and blessing of those she protects on earth, for the pious and faithful Christians!

The most Blessed Virgin was, therefore, at all times most justly venerated in our holy Church above all other Saints, and in preference to that of all other Saints has her protection and intercession been invoked with the greatest confidence. And this trust reposed in her, the mother of charity, by pious Christians, was very often most gloriously justified, as is proved by history, by great and frequent miraculous gifts of grace. St. Bernard, her great advocate, therefore, most deservedly and significantly implores her intercession on the Feast of her Assumption with a heart full of reverence, and we, the disciples and worshipers of her divine Son, should echo the words of that celebrated teacher of the Church, when he says: "O thou glorious Queen of heaven and earth, most Blessed Mary! Thy deep humility and heavenly purity brought down from the highest heavens the King of glory, the eternal Son of God, from the bosom of His Father into thy virginal womb, and to-day He has exalted thee to the highest degree of honor in heaven, and made thee the dispenser of His divine graces.

Behold, O powerful Virgin! we poor children of Adam to-day at thine Assumption accompany thee with the most joyful felicitations to the throne of thy glory, and pray thee most humbly to make manifest in thy love to the world the grace thou hast found with God. O, by thy powerful intercession obtain for us of God the forgiveness of all the sins whereby we have so often offended thy Son. Through thee the sick expect relief, the disheartened strength, the oppressed help, the sad comfort, and those in danger safety and deliverance. Grant us, therefore, thine assistance, O Queen of charity! and despise not the prayer that we send up to thee on this solemn and joyful day celebrated in thy honor, but cause that Jesus, thy beloved Son, who is God in eternity, may bestow the gift of His grace upon all who call upon thy sweet name with fervent hearts."

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 44–4.

"Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating this festival in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, on whose Assumption into heaven the angels rejoice and give praise to the Son of God. My heart hath uttered a good word, I speak my works to the king." Glory be to the Father.

PRAYER.

Pardon, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the sins of Thy servants, that we, who are not able to please Thee by our deeds, may be saved by the intercession of the Mother of Thy Son. Who livest.

EPISTLE.—Ecclus. 24 : 11–20.

"In all I sought rest, and I shall abide in the inheritance of the Lord. Then the Creator of all things commanded, and said to me: and he that made me rested in my tabernacle. And he said to me: Let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thy inheritance in Israel, and take root in my elect. From the beginning and before the world, was I created, and unto the world to come I shall not cease to be, and in the holy dwelling-place I have ministered before him. And so was I established in Sion, and in the holy city likewise I rested, and my power was in Jerusalem. And I took root in an honorable people, and in the portion of my God his inheritance, and my abode is in the full assembly of saints. I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus, and as a cypress-tree on mount Sion. I was exalted like a palm-tree in Cades, and as a rose-plant in Jericho; as a fair olive-tree in the plains, and as a plane-tree by the water in the streets was I exalted. I gave a sweet smell like cinnamon, and aromatical balm: I yielded a sweet odor like the best myrrh."

As in the Epistles of the Feasts of the Immaculate Conception, of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel and Our Lady of Snow, the Church, in the Epistle of

to-day's feast also applies a part of the praise, in which the wise son of Sirach glorifies the divine Wisdom, to the Mother of the Lord who is full of grace. And especially to-day may it in truth be said of her, that she has found a haven in the inheritance of the Lord in the heavenly abodes, that she resides in the community of the Saints in the heavenly Jerusalem, surpassing all the other elect by the odor of her virtues, by the glory of her holiness, by her majesty as Queen of all the Angels and Saints, inferior only to Him who has chosen her to be His Mother, and exalted her to the throne of His majesty.

GOSPEL.—Luke 10 : 38-42.

"At that time, Jesus entered into a certain town; and a certain woman named Martha, received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sitting also at the Lord's feet, heard his word. But Martha was busy about much serving. Who stood and said: Lord, hast thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? speak to her therefore, that she help me. And the Lord answering, said to her: Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and art troubled about many things. But one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her."

At the time when Jesus entered into the town of Bethany, as related in to-day's Gospel, Mary Magdalen, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, was already converted by the kind compassion of the Saviour, and lived again in most beautiful harmony with her pious brother and sister. After her conversion she was specially occupied in pious meditations and spiritual affairs, and, therefore, used the opportunity offered by the coming of the Saviour to her house, to satisfy her spiritual desires, and sitting at the Lord's feet, she listened to Him, forgetting everything around her, and meditating only upon the words of salvation issuing from the lips of Eternal Truth. "And the more humbly she sat at the Lord's feet," remarks St. Augustine, "the more she received; for the water runs down from the height of the hill; it flows into the hollow of the valley." But her sister Martha was busy about serving, and full of care to do honor to the dear guest. And of her St. Augustine very appropriately says: "She thought only of entertaining the Lord, whilst Mary thought only of being entertained by Him. Martha prepared a feast for our Lord, whilst Mary already partook of His (spiritual) feast."

But while our Saviour, as shown by His answer to Martha, preferred the behavior of her sister Mary to hers, it was not His intention, as St. Augustine remarks, to censure the kind care of Martha in wishing to serve Him, but He desired only to show that the wish of her sister of listening to His words, was better and more useful, and that in general that solicitude alone is of true value which tends to the one necessary thing, to what is eternal and heavenly, as being alone lasting and imperishable, while all earthly things are fleeting and perish-

able, and thus without real and lasting value. Solicitude for temporal matters must, therefore, always yield to that of eternal matters, as has been declared by the Saviour in His sermon on the mount, where He says: "*Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God, and his justice; and all these* (*earthly*) *things shall be added unto you.*" (Matt. 6 : 33.)

Our holy Church, therefore, for that reason reminds us with great significance, on the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, of the coming of Jesus to the pious family in Bethany, because the words of the Saviour, regarding Mary Magdalen: "*Mary hath chosen the best part, which shall not be taken away from her,*" are in a much higher degree applicable to the most Blessed Mother of our Lord than they were to the sister of Lazarus; for while Mary Magdalen chose the best part, the Eternal and Heavenly, when already advanced in years, and after a long life of sin, the most Blessed Virgin Mary had chosen it already from her earliest youth, and had aspired during her whole life only after the one thing necessary, unconcerned about earthly things, devoting herself entirely to the service of God, and seeking only to attain virtue and perfection. And the part she had chosen was not taken away from her; for in consequence of that holy and truly angelic life she was exalted to her high dignity, and has obtained the eternal glory wherein, with her divine Son, she rejoices for ever.

ST. ROCH.

(August 16.)

"Patron in time of Pestilence."

You have perhaps seen, dear reader, a picture representing a man dressed in the garb of a pilgrim, and at his feet a little dog, holding in his mouth a loaf of bread? This pilgrim is St Roch. Roch was born in the city of Montpellier in Languedoc, his father's name was John and his mother's Shera. John had many cities under his dominion. They were childless and prayed to God and the blessed Virgin Mary for an heir; the Almighty heard their prayer. In the year 1290 St. Roch was born, and his mother was astonished, when she saw that her child had a red cross upon his breast, she therefore hoped that he would become a priest. When twelve years old, Roch determined to renounce the pleasures of the world. His father after a short time became ill, and sending for his son Roch said to him; "I will soon leave the world, and as I love you, my dear son, I trust you will not disobey my last will. First of all I desire you to love God, then to assist the poor widows and orphans; to guard against

avarice, protect the virgins and prevent them from leading a wicked life." Although not twenty years old, he was mindful of his father's admonitions, gave all his inheritance to the poor, took the habit of a pilgrim, a sack and a staff, and coarse sandals and went to Rome. After he had crossed the Alps, he came to the city of Aquapendente, where a fearful pestilence was raging. Roch at once hurried to the hospital, in order to nurse the poor and the sick, Roch with his right hand made the sign of the cross upon them, and healed them all, and leaving them he went to Cesena, a city of the province of Romagna, where the same plague was raging, and there also he healed them by the same means, that of making the sign of the cross over them. He thence proceeded to Rome, where a horrible pestilence was also prevailing. He first of all made his confession, for which purpose he went to Cardinal Alessandro d' Este of Brittany, who begged him to free the city from pestilence. Roch answered: "Venerable Father, the salvation of the living and the dead depends upon God; therefore pray to Him for He rejects no one who has recourse to Him;"—and lifting up his eyes towards heaven, Roch thus prayed: "O Lord, deliver the Holy City of Rome from the fearful pestilence, and protect this holy man through the sign of the holy cross;"—and he signed him with the sign of the holy cross upon his forehead, so that the cross could be seen by every one. All wondered and some of them said, that he should remove it again, for it was disfiguring the Cardinal's face. The Cardinal himself also felt ashamed and asked Roch to remove it; but Roch said: "Venerable Father, why do you despise the sign of the cross, upon which the Son of God has redeemed the world? Bear, therefore, the sign of life and salvation, in order to obtain grace." Roch then went to Piacenza, where a frightful epidemic had broken out; he again entered into his former duties of nursing the sick, whom he healed by making the sign of the cross over them. Being tired he lay down upon his couch, where he heard a voice saying: "Roch, my faithful servant, although you have suffered trouble, cold, hardships and poverty for my sake, you will suffer even greater afflictions and bodily pains."

Falling sick, he lay down under a tree to rest. Afterwards he went to a small hut and prayed, when at once a spring of wonderful water gushed forth, in which he washed himself, and was not only refreshed, but also relieved from all his pains. Near the forest were beautiful fields whither many people had retired, and among them was Gothard, accompanied by many knights, servants, and hounds of the chase. One day, while Gothard was at the table, a little dog came, and took a piece of bread, then ran away, and carried it to Roch; the second day it did the same thing, and Gothard reprimanded the servant for not feeding it, but the servants declared that they had fed it with the rest. When the dog came the third time, and took a loaf of bread from the table, Gothard ran after it, and found that it carried the bread to Roch who blessed it. Gothard seeing this, went to the hut of Roch, and asked him who he was and what ailed

him. Roch told him to keep away from him, for he was infected with the plague. Gothard then left him, but after he had returned home, he determined to revisit Roch, and when he had reached his hut, he said: "I have come to nurse you until you are well." Roch and Gothard conversed and spoke of God and eternity. At length they became hungry, and Gothard, astonished that the little dog had not come as usual with bread, said: "My father, from whence shall we procure food?" And Roch answered: "Take my staff, hat, and mantle, and go to the city of Piacenza for some bread." Gothard received but two pieces of bread, and, returning to Roch, he told him all that had happened. Roch said: "Your friend who despises the servants of God, is now stricken down with the plague, and will die to-day; I will now go to the city, and heal the sick by the power of God; you, however, will remain here, and guard our hut." Roch then went to the hospital, and, by making the sign of the cross, healed all who were sick. When towards evening he returned to his hut a great many people followed him to the forest, and they heard a voice from heaven, saying: "Roch, Roch, your prayer is heard, and we have made thee whole!" and all were astonished at hearing a voice calling a name which was unknown to them. Roch now left the hut, and started for France where a great war had broken out. He was arrested as a spy, and, being brought before the king, was asked his name. He said: "I am a pilgrim and a servant of God." The king, however, had him thrown into a dark prison, where Roch thanked and praised God day and night, and suffered very much for five years. Feeling death approach, he begged the warden of the prison to send for a priest, who, when he came, saw a ray of light shining upon the face of Roch. The priest asked him what he desired of him, when Roch fell down upon his knees and asked pardon of his sins, and at the same time besought him to give him holy Communion.

The priest ran weeping to the king who had imprisoned Roch, and told him that the Almighty was angry with him for having detained so long in prison a Saint who never had committed sin, and he told the king of the austere life Roch had led in prison, and many persons hurried to the cell to see him. To the dying Saint an Angel appeared, saying in the name of the Almighty: "Roch, my faithful servant, the time has come when I will receive thy soul, and whatever thou wilt ask of God shall be granted thee." And Roch gave up the ghost, and went to eternal happiness. They found by his side a little tablet on which was written the following: "All those who are stricken by the plague, and who pray for help through the merits and intercession of St. Roch, the servant of God, shall be healed."

Many hospitals are placed under the protection of St. Roch, and he is invoked especially in time of pestilence and contagion. In the year 1414, in the city of Constance, where a great council was held, a plague broke out, and as it was constantly on the increase, the people invoked St. Roch, when at once the plague ceased. The same is said to have happened also in other cities.

Not only were chapels, therefore, erected in honor of St. Roch, as for instance in Bingen on the Rhine, but communities for the purpose of nursing the sick and the poor were established. We must believe that if God distinguishes a Saint during his life by special graces, as He did St. Roch, He will not take away from him this beneficial grace after his death, but that the Saint will assist us also in heaven, if we fervently invoke his intercession.

ST. MAXIMUS.

(August 17.)

"The Child-like Soul."

If we see in the Spring-time a tree covered with blossoms, the very sight gives us great pleasure. Such a tree is the emblem of a young soul blooming in the garden of the Catholic Church, and bearing the rich fruits of virtue and piety. Parents who have children around them, could often enjoy such a beautiful prospect if they would rightly instruct their children, and give them a Christian example. You may see, dear reader, how much good has been brought forth in the soul of a child if you only read the life of St. Maximus, written by Bishop Victor, who at that time lived in Africa.

The cruel and impious King Hunneric had been on the throne seven years, when Satan, the enemy of man from the beginning, made use of a certain Arian Bishop, named Cyrila, to incite the blood-thirsty king against the Catholics, who, he said, would destroy the peace of the kingdom if they were not exterminated. The cruel king, however, was severely punished by Almighty God; for his whole body became putrified, and was eaten up by worms.

The king commenced his persecution by forcing the Catholics living in the African provinces to be baptized again according to the Arian rite, and in order to carry out his plan, he published several decrees. According to one of these the priests were all exiled, and received no food but oats; as his rage increased, he commanded even this kind of food to be denied them; he then closed all the Catholic churches, and had large stones placed before the doors; the convents were given to the heathens, and the inmates sold as slaves.

Nothing but lamentations were heard in every direction, nothing but tears were seen, but at the same time the Christians were firmly resolved to die for Christ. How many noble men exchanged earth for heaven, and sacrificed their all! How many tender women of the first families were publicly scourged and

tortured, and by their perseverance obtained the victory! How many children publicly despised the royal decree, and refused to walk on the broad way of damnation!

At that time seven brothers were arrested who lived together in a monastery, and prepared to become priests; their names were Boniface, Servus, Rusticus, Liberatus, Rogatus, Septimus, and Maximus. They were all brought before the judge in the city of Cathage, who first tried to entice them by flatteries and promises, but the soldiers of Christ refused all that had been offered them, and exclaimed as with one mouth: "ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM! With us shall not be repeated what, according to the precept of the Gospel can be given but ONCE; he who is cleansed once by baptism, is not in need of being cleansed again; do what you wish; torture our bodies, for it is better to suffer temporal pains than to be punished for ever. Keep for yourself what you have promised us, you will soon be destroyed together with your riches; but we shall not be deprived of what the tri-une God has given us in baptism." The judge then ordered them to be cast into prison. Many, however, who remained firm in their faith, by giving money to the soldiers, obtained permission to visit the seven brothers, by whose instruction and the power of faith they were so strengthened that they also desired with their whole heart to suffer for the name of Christ. The tyrant heard of it, and, filled with anger, he ordered the prisoners to be tied on a ship filled with faggots, and these set on fire. When it was at sea, the prisoners, led from the prison like lambs, were accompanied by many Catholics who envied them their heavy chains, as if they had been the most precious ornaments. The brothers went cheerfully to the place of execution as if to a wedding-feast, and sang: "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to man of good will. We have longed for this day to arrive, which is more joyful to us than going to a feast. Behold, now is the acceptable time, now is the time of salvation in which we suffer death for the belief in our Lord and God!" And to the people also they said: "Fear not, ye elect, the present persecution, but let us die together for Christ, since He died for us, and has redeemed us with the price of His precious blood."

The judge endeavored to separate from the other brothers one who was called Maximus, and who was seemingly a child; he said to him: "Dear child, why do you seek your death? Let them go, for they are mad, but listen to us that you may save your life, and be admitted into the presence of the king." Maximus, although a child in age, was a man in purpose, and he exclaimed: "No one shall ever separate me from my holy tutor Liberatus, and my other brothers; with them I walked in the fear of God, with them I am ready to suffer martyrdom, with them I hope to find eternal happiness; do not think that you can seduce me, although I am young; it was the will of God that we lived together, and He will give us grace also that we all shall be crowned with the same death. If I would deny Him, He also would deny me, for He has said

Himself: 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father, who is in heaven.'" (Matt. 10 : 32, 33.)

Seeing that his endeavor was fruitless, the judge ordered them all, as soon as possible, to be put on board the ship, and laid bound hand and foot upon the faggots; but when the ship was set on fire, the flames were extinguished before the eyes of all in a supernatural manner, and although it was fired several times it would not burn. The tyrant became furious, and commanded them to be beaten to death with the oars.

When their venerable bodies were thrown into the sea they did not sink, but floated towards the shore. The tyrant himself is said to have been terror-stricken, but not converted. The people, however, who saw it, rejoiced, and decently buried the bodies of the holy martyrs.

Thus the happy martyrs suffered for their belief in the Blessed Trinity; they have finished their glorious course, and are crowned by the Lord, to whom be all honor and glory forever. Amen.

ST. HELENA.

August 18.

"Distinction."

St Helena is said to have been an inn-keeper in England; she there became acquainted with a Roman officer, named Constantius, to whom she was married. Both were pagans, as was also their son Constantine, who by the providence of God afterwards became an Emperor and Christian. He was the first Christian Emperor, who governed the Roman Empire. Helena is said to have been converted to the Catholic religion by her son.

Constantine honored his mother so much, that he conferred the title of Empress upon her; he had her likeness engraved upon his coins, presented her with various estates, and placed the treasures of the Empire at her disposal. Helena was sixty-three years old when she became a Catholic; but she nevertheless led even at this age as Christian a life, as if she had been brought up in the faith. Her faith and zeal were extraordinary. When she was nearly eighty years old, she made a pilgrimage to Palestine; God, it is said, commanded her in a vision to do so; at the same time she received from her son, the Em-

peror, all necessary power and large sums of money, in order to restore the churches in the holy land as her piety should dictate.

Helena found the holy places in the same state of ruin, in which the hatred of the Pagan Emperor had left them. The holy cross had been lost, and no one knew what had become of it; "the devil endeavored," said St. Ambrose, "to hide from the eyes of man the sword with which he had been pierced." And when the Pagans saw, that the holy sepulchre was venerated by the Christians, they covered it with earth and placed stones above it; and erected over the holy sepulchre the statue of Jupiter, and where Christ was crucified, the statue of Venus, the goddess of unchaste love.

Helena's greatest solicitude was to find the holy cross, and to attain her object she interrogated not only Christians, but Jews also regarding the spot where the Saviour had been crucified. At the place designated the Empress caused all the buildings to be torn down, especially the temple of Venus, the rubbish to be carried away and the ground dug up. After some time they found the holy sepulchre and not far from it the three crosses and a small tablet, on which were written the words; "Jesus of Nazereth, King of the Jews!" Her joy at finding these precious relics was very great, but she soon became sad when she found it impossible to tell, which of the three crosses was that of our Saviour. No one could give her advice on the subject, and she therefore looked to God for assistance. St. Macarius, at that time Bishop of Jerusalem, proposed to carry the crosses to a noble lady who was very sick; he knelt down praying that God would indicate to them the true cross by curing the sick lady. In the presence of the Empress and many people the lady was touched with one cross after the other, but when touched with the third, she at once became well.

The Empress rejoiced to have found the cross of Christ; joy and love towards the Saviour urged her to embrace it, respect and humility however kept her back. (On the 3rd of May this event of finding the Holy Cross is commemorated.) A large and magnificent church was then erected, covering both places, Mount Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre, which were close together.

Six miles from Jerusalem is Bethlehem, the birth-place of our Saviour; the Emperor Adrian had desecrated this place, and erected a temple in honor of Adonis; but after every vestige of pagan worship had been destroyed, St. Helena built a magnificent church on the spot, and over the place also, where the Saviour had ascended into heaven. As Helena was led by piety to venerate the places, sanctified by our Saviour, to build splendid churches and adorn them with rich ornaments, by the same virtue was she also led to perform works of humility. While in Jerusalem she was simply and modestly attired; she never occupied any particular seat when at church, but remained with the other women; she invited the virgins dedicated to God, to her house, and served them with her own hands.

After this the Empress traveled through the whole of Palestine and her long journey was marked by works of benevolence and charity. She everywhere made rich presents, especially to the poor; endeavored to free the prisoners, to assist the exiled and oppressed, and whenever she came to a church even in the smallest village, she would present it with rich vestments.

Shortly after this journey, Helena felt that her last hour had come; she gave her son excellent advice, begged him to govern the Empire in a truly Christian spirit, and exhorted him to be kind to his subjects, to remain firm in virtue; not to be proud, but to serve God in fear and humility, and after giving him her blessing, died in his arms, full of peace and joy.

We often see persons, who from a low condition in life have obtained wealth and position, become proud and haughty. St. Helena from an humble position of life rose to the highest rank, which could be attained by any woman: she was the honored mother of the most powerful prince upon earth, and in her could be seen, in what true nobility consists; she was very simple and unassuming, went to church dressed in the plainest manner, served her guests with her own hands; but for the honor of God and the welfare of her fellow beings she was princely in her liberality. The powerful King of heaven and earth did all to assist man, but He Himself lived in the greatest poverty. The contrary of Christian nobility is selfishness, which is frequently found in the rich, who make a great display for the sake of themselves and their children, but are mean and miserly towards others, refusing often to give any thing for the honor and glory of God.

ST. JULIUS.

(August 19.)

"Wisdom and Folly."

In the year 182 after Christ, Commodus, who was very hostile to the Christians, became emperor. He was vicious and cruel. In the eleventh year of his reign, he ordered a special feast on his birth-day, commanding all the Roman people to attend. On the day of the feast, Commodus made his appearance, clothed in a lion's skin, a crown upon his head, and holding a club in his hands, and after having himself offered incense to Jupiter, he sat upon the imperial throne. He was so wicked that he wished to be regarded as Hercules, and as such to be worshiped. The assembled crowd cried with a loud voice: "Hercules, Protector of the State, and Defender of Roman liberty!" The Roman

Senate also paid homage to him, and no one was allowed to smile at the absurdity; those who laughed were at once put to death. This is testified to by Dio, a pagan Senator, who was present. To keep from laughing or to conceal it, Dio took leaves from his laurel-wreath, and put them in his mouth, advising the other senators to do the same, so as to escape the danger of being put to death.

At the same time several Christians lived in the so-called Butcher street of Rome, among whom were the following servants of God: Eusebius, Vincent, Peregrine, and Pontius. These man had, according to the example of the Apostles and primitive Christians, sold all that they possessed, and divided the money among the poor, so that, freed from all earthly solicitude, they might with more zeal serve God alone. They prayed very fervently, and their highest ambition was to die for Christ. When these true followers of Christ saw and heard of the impiety of the wicked emperor, and of the blindness of the people, they mourned over the perdition of so many souls, but especially over their terrible blasphemy. At length they found it impossible to conceal their indignation, and moved by the spirit of God, and burning with zeal, they preached the faith in one true God, and exclaimed to the people: "Beloved, cease to worship the devil, give honor to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, do penance, and be baptized, so that you may not eternally perish with your emperor!"

Julius, a Roman senator, was moved by their sincere admonition, and received St. Peregrine and his companions into his house. After the articles of faith had been explained to him and his family, he believed with his whole house, divided at once all that he possessed among the poor, and then sent for the venerable priest Rufinus to baptize them. He never again offered homage to the emperor, but publicly confessed and proclaimed his belief in Christ. The love of God was so great in this neophyte that he sincerely wished to die for the name of Christ.

The emperor, informed of all this, became enraged, and, commanding Julius to be brought before him, spoke thus: "Julius, have you become insane? Have you forsaken Jupiter and Hercules, and embraced I know not what nonsense?" Julius courageously answered: "You, O emperor, are led into error by believing that to be God, which is nothing; remember you will be eternally ruined with your gods if you do not abandon them, and be converted to the only true God." Julius spoke these and other words with great firmness to the emperor who became very angry, and at once sent for Vitellius, a general of the Roman infantry, a very wicked and cruel man. The emperor commanded him to examine Julius, and to force him to worship Hercules, but if he would refuse to put him to death. Vitellius first cast Julius into prison, and at the expiration of three days he had his own chair placed in the public street, and had Julius, the senator, brought before him in chains; he then said: "You have heard the command of the emperor; lay aside your stubborness, and worship the gods who protect the

Roman empire; if, however, you do not obey, you shall be put to death." Julius replied: "O wretched man, you should know that you with your superstitious emperor will perish for ever." Then said Vitellius: "In whom do you hope and confide, Julius, since you are already condemned to die?" The holy martyr answered: "My confidence is in eternal life, my hope is in Christ who will condemn you and your emperor for ever." The judge, enraged by these words, commanded Julius to be scourged until the Saint gave up his spirit, and thus his pure soul, adorned with the martyr's crown, was received into heaven. His body was, by command of Vitellius, thrown in the arena. St. Peregrine and his companions, who heard of it, took the body of the holy martyr, and buried it in the cemetery of Calepodius, August 19, in the year 192.

The Emperor Commodus and his pagans considered the Christians fools who publicly proclaimed their belief in Christ, and the Christians regarded the emperor and his followers as mad, because they believed in, and worshiped idols. The Senator Julius, who was a pagan, was convinced that the pagan emperor was insane, but that the Christians were wise, and he gave his life for his faith. We easily see now who was wise and who foolish, and any one of us would rather be with Julius than with Commodus. This accusation against the early Christians of being madmen, is even now repeated. If, for instance, the daughter of a wealthy family becomes a sister of charity, or the son a priest; if a poor servant on Sundays, during her free time, visits and nurses the sick, and gives her hard-earned money to the poor, the world at once says: "They are eccentric or crazy!" but to live in the world, and to enjoy its fleeting pleasures, is looked upon as the height of wisdom.

Dear reader, if you wish to know which is a fool and which is wise, the Christian who, in a spirit of self-denial and humility, gives up the world and its pleasures, or the worldling who enjoys all the pleasures of the world, go to the first cemetery, and you will be satisfied.

ST. BERNARD.

August 20.

"The Jews,"

Almighty God bestowed the greatest favor on St Bernard by giving him a mother, who lived in the odor of sanctity; her name was Aletha and she had six children besides Bernard. As a boy, he showed in a high degree all the qualifications of a good and perfect Religious.

When in his twentieth year his mother died, and he was for a long time doubtful as to what state of life he should choose. On entering a quiet church, it became clear to him, and he resolved to renounce the world and dedicate his life to God. When Bernard told this determination to his family, he found them greatly opposed to it—for they belonged to the most noble family of Burgundy—but instead of being diverted from his purpose, he endeavored to draw down the grace of God upon his brothers, some of whom at once resolved to leave the world and its vanities. The oldest of them, Guido being married, was prevented from fulfilling his wish, and besides his young wife would not listen to the idea of a separation. St. Bernard then said: "Your wife shall either consent or die!" Soon after the young wife was attacked by illness and sent for her brother-in-law, promising him to enter a convent, when at once health and peace were restored to her, and her husband was free to join St. Bernard. Gerard, another brother was a soldier, and when Bernard asked him to enter religion, he received an evasive answer; he then laid his hand on the young soldier's side and said: "You will be wounded in this side with a spear, and the wound will open your soul to my word." A few days afterwards the Castle of Grancey was stormed; in the attack Gerard received a wound in the side and was taken prisoner. As soon as he recovered health and freedom, he gave himself to the service of God, and many other young noblemen, filled with the grace of God and persuaded by St. Bernard followed his example. They first lived in community in a house at Chatillon, preparing to enter the monastery of Citeaux.

When the five brothers took leave of their father, the old man was very much grieved; the youngest brother, Nivard was playing in the yard with other children, and Guido giving him the farewell kiss, said: "My dear brother you will one day be the sole possessor of this castle and all its vast domains." The boy then as if inspired from above, replied: "You take heaven for yourself and leave me the world? That is not a fair equal division." And from that moment he could not be detained from following his brothers.

This order of Citeaux had lost many of its members by disease and no one had made application to be received, when Bernard with his thirty companions

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appeared, all of whom were joyfully welcomed by the holy Abbot Stephen. St. Bernard was then twenty-three years old; he did himself what he told others to do "*If you wish to live in this house, you must leave the body outside; for only spirits enter here.*" He was always recollected and had mortified his senses to such an extent, that he once drank oil instead of water, without discovering the mistake. He ate and slept as little as possible, and although very weak, his principal nourishment consisted of rye-bread, dipped in warm water. When in the novitiate the only faults committed by him were, first, he forgot the seven penitential psalms, which he said daily for his deceased mother, and secondly, he rejoiced in hearing some news told by his relatives, when on a visit to him.

The number of religious meanwhile increased, so that St. Stephen was obliged to found several other monasteries, one of which was to be erected in a wilderness where robbers dwelt, in the so-called Worm-wood Valley. The prudent Abbot chose St. Bernard, his brother, and some other monks to make the foundation, and St. Bernard was their Superior; they cultivated the wilderness, and built small cells for their dwellings; they often suffered from want, not having sufficient bread to eat, and they made a broth of acorns. One winter the monks suffered greatly from hunger and cold, and some of them imagined that it would be impossible for them to remain there. Then St. Bernard, with his brethren prostrated at the foot of the altar, implored the mercy of God, when suddenly they all heard a strange voice in the church, saying: "Bernard, rise, thy prayer is heard!" Immediately two men came to the abbey and brought presents, and soon afterwards whole wagon-loads of provisions arrived, so that St. Bernard was more troubled at his present abundance than he had been at his previous want. He was persuaded by the Bishop of Chalons to preach in the different churches of his diocese, and the effect of his sermons was extraordinary; priests and laymen, learned persons, officers, men of high rank, were thereby incited to enter his monastery. A contemporary of St. Bernard says: "This weak and nearly dead man, who had only a voice left, obtained with his every breath a great number of spiritual fishes, as often as he cast out the net."

The dark valley where Bernard had settled, became world-renowned, and merited its new name Clairvaux—valley of light. A monk of that abbey writes as follows concerning the place: "Here the fools of the world regain wisdom, the inner man is renewed, while the outward man is mortified; here the proud are made humble, the rich poor, the ignorant receive wisdom, and darkness flies before the light. Here exists but one heart and one soul among so many men coming from so many different countries." Even the father of St. Bernard at last came, took the habit, and humbly performed all the exercises of the order. One day a troop of noblemen who were going to a tournament, came to their abbey, and asked permission to stay over night. St. Bernard begged them not to go to such festivals during the holy time of Lent, and as they did not listen to him, he said: "I shall ask it from God." He then gave them wine, and

blessing the cup, he said: "Drink to the health of your soul!" They drank and went away; on their route their conscience was roused, they repented of their sins; all returned to Bernard, laid aside their arms and rich robes, and asked to be received as brothers of the order. The number of members was nearly seven hundred, and monks from distant countries were sent to Bernard so as to return and found convents.

One day St. Bernard met a great crowd accompanying a criminal to the place of execution. Bernard ran through the crowd, seized the rope with which the poor sinner was bound, and said: "Let me have this man, and I will execute him myself." He now brought him to the duke who, when he saw Bernard coming with the criminal, exclaimed: "What are you doing, venerable father? Do you wish to save a devil? He is a wicked man who has deserved hell a thousand times." Bernard replied: "No, my lord, I will not free him from punishment; instead of a short death I wish to punish him for life; he shall be crucified every day until his end." Bernard then put on him the habit, led him into the abbey, where the wolf was changed into a lamb, and until his death lived a life of penance.

In the year 1130 Pope Honorius died, and the Cardinals were divided in their choice of a new Pope; the worldly-minded chose Anacletus; the good and pious selected as Pope Innocent II., who, being exiled by the adherents of Anacletus, fled to France for protection. King Louis VI., not knowing which of the two Popes to recognize, assembled the Bishops and Prelates of the whole kingdom, although they were all aware that in such a difficult and important affair no one could judge better than the man who was a living temple of the Holy Ghost—St. Bernard. The king, therefore, invited him to the council, where the assembled Bishops and Prelates commissioned him to examine and decide which of the two Popes was the legitimate one, and when the Saint, after a careful examination, gave his decision that Innocent II. was the legitimate and supreme head of the Church, all rose and pronounced themselves of his opinion.

In order to finish the work of unity, St. Bernard was sent to the king of England who said that his conscience did not allow him to consider Innocent as the legitimate Pope; but St. Bernard made the following courageous response: "Do not feel scrupulous on account of the sins of others, for which you are not answerable; I take this upon myself, and shall be responsible for you before God!" The king then consented, and recognized Innocent II., and the other princes followed except Duke William X. of Aquitaine, who was induced by Bishop Gerard to persist in adhering to Anacletus as the legitimate Pope, and to persecute the followers of Innocent. William was a very wicked man; gigantic in his proportions, he could devour a meal prepared for eight persons; he was so quarrelsome that he would not live without war, at the same time he lived a most sinful life, and even gloried in his crimes. St. Bernard was sent to this man, the head of the opposition, to convert him; he, therefore, without any

ceremony sent a messenger to the duke requesting him to come to a monastery in Aquitaine. To the astonishment of all the monks, the Duke came and remained for seven days with St. Bernard, and was moved by the kind admonitions of the Saint; he promised to do penance for all his sins; but Satan soon uprooted the good seed, for Bishop Gerard, who was in favor of Anacletus, persuaded the duke not to keep his word, and thus William became worse than ever. After some years, circumstances again permitted Bernard to remonstrate with the duke who finally promised to recognize Innocent II., but he would not recall the exiled Bishops. One day St. Bernard celebrated high-mass, at which the duke was present; the Saint, after the elevation, took the consecrated host, descended from the altar, went towards the duke, and said: "We and other servants of God have long besought the Almighty, but you have not regarded it; behold, the Head and the Lord of the Church comes now, the Judge at whose name every knee shall bow of those who are in heaven, on earth, and in hell! Into His hands thy soul will fall one day; dost thou intend to despise and treat Him, as thou hast done His ministers?" Confusion, fear, and loud lamentations were now heard through the whole congregation; the duke could not utter a word, but fainted and fell upon the floor. St. Bernard touched him, and at once the duke rose, did what the holy Abbot desired, and was perfectly reconciled to the Church, and became henceforth a better man. Filled with sorrow, he gave up his duchy, and although only thirty-eight years old, lived in seclusion the life of a pious penitent.

St. Bernard afterwards accompanied the Pope to Rome. The Pope commissioned St. Bernard to stop a bloody war then raging between Genoa and Pisa, and what no power on earth could do, was effected by the pale and attenuated monk of Clairvaux. By his sermons in those cities he so touched all hearts that a permanent peace was concluded. St. Bernard was often sent by the Pope upon similar legations, and he exercised greater power over the hearts of princes and nations than any man of that time. He was the object of an unexempled veneration, but was in consequence of his great humility as indifferent to it as a corpse; on the contrary, he was pained to be withdrawn from his cell, and forced to travel around the world. In several places they almost forced him to become their Bishop; the Archbishop of Genoa even wished to resign his see in his favor, but St. Bernard desired no office, and was content to remain a poor monk. Some of his monks, however, were made Bishops, and one, Eugene III., became Pope, whose prudent and successful government is to be ascribed to the direction of St. Bernard, who gave him wise admonitions and counsels, at the same time, however, respecting him as the supreme head of the Catholic Church. Notwithstanding his weakness and debility, he accepted the summons of the Pope to preach a crusade, for at that time the Christians of Jerusalem were in danger of being conquered by the Mahommetans. On Easter-Sunday, 1146, St. Bernard, in the presence of the king of France, and before an innumerable

crowd, preached in the open air in favor of a crusade, and every one cried out loudly: "The cross, the cross! God wills it, God wills it!" The king first threw himself before St. Bernard, and solemnly promised to give his assistance to the Christians of the Holy Land, and then came a large number of knights and barons who promised to do the same. The Saint went to other places preaching with equal success; many even desired him to become their leader.

As soon as the crusade was ready, a German monk, named Rudolf, incited the people to exterminate the Jews, who were cruelly beaten, but St. Bernard by his eloquence arrested these excesses, and is still respected by the Jews.

To incite Germany to participate in the crusades, St. Bernard went thither; the effects of his miracles, his sermons, his prayer, and authority cannot be described. From France and Germany two great armies with their princes set out to assist the Christians in the Holy Land, and this crusade was, it may be said, the work of one man, of the humble monk. Wherever he went, kings, emperors, and even the Pope respected his presence, for all eyes were fixed upon the pale monk. He discovered, however, that the love and honor of men is deceitful. The crusade ended disastrously, and although the incompetency of the leaders, and misconduct of the soldiers were the principal reason of its failure, the disgrace of miscarriage was thrown upon the once so much admired St. Bernard. To this were added many other sufferings and tribulations; for once a clergyman gave the Saint, who was then sixty years old, a blow upon his cheek, so that it became swollen; the Saint was then enabled to imitate his Master not only in deeds but also in sufferings.

Finally, when his soul was to be separated from his body, the Archbishop of Metz came to ask the Saint's assistance, because civil war had broken out between the nobles and peasants of the province of Metz. Bernard rose from his sickbed, and was carried upon the shoulders of two monks into the encampment of the two parties, and the fulness of grace and blessing which God had bestowed upon him, reconciled them. Returning to his abbey, he died surrounded by seven hundred monks, who stood weeping near the dying Saint. Lifting up his eyes towards heaven, he said: "I do not know to which of two things I should resign myself, to the love of my children which urges me to remain here below, or to the love of my God which draws me up to Him."

ST. JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL.

(August 21.)

"Sacrifice of Love."

FIVE centuries after the birth of St. Bernard, Jane was born in the same city of Dijon, and if we have seen in the life of St. Bernard and his brothers that in no place is it so easy to attain sanctity as in a strict order, the life of St. Jane will show us that we can be sanctified in the world and the family.

Jane was but eighteen months old when her mother died; her father, an officer of high rank, although burdened with the discharge of important affairs, instructed his daughter himself with the utmost care in religion. When later, her sister Margaret married the Baron d'Effran, Jane was allowed to go on a visit to her sister in Poitou, their future place of residence.

While there, a young nobleman, a friend of her brother-in-law, became attached to her, and her sister and the baron endeavored to persuade Jane to become his wife, and they nearly succeeded in their efforts. Jane had received several visits from him, when she fortunately discovered what had been purposely concealed from her, that the nobleman was a Protestant. All further persuasions were fruitless, for Jane declared firmly that she would never marry a man whose religion was in opposition to the Catholic faith, and because she refused in the most important affair of life to obev her sister, she was treated in the harshest and most cruel manner.

The young girl's situation had now become quite sad, particularly as she had no friends in Poitou. Thus her sufferings were to her a double gain, in merit, because she was placed in this difficulty on account of her religious scruples, and in the necessity she was under to seek consolation from God. At length a letter from her father summoned her home, for a Baron de Chantal, well known for his heroic deeds as a soldier, and for his great virtue and piety, had asked her hand in marriage. Fremiot, this was the name of her father, spoke to her on the subject, but added that she was free to act according to her own will; she, however, replied that she would submit to his wishes, and prepared herself for this important step by seclusion, prayer, and frequently receiving the holy Sacraments.

Women of rank seldom care for domestic affairs, leaving them entirely to the servants; but Jane soon after her marriage showed herself a model of what a Christian wife should be. She made it a rule that every morning and evening all the persons belonging to the house should say their devotions in common; during the week-days she heard Mass at the chapel of the castle, but on Sundays and festivals no bad weather could prevent her from attending the services in the church of the village, although it was two miles distant; she said that the

rich and the noble should give the people a good example, and should pray to God with them.

By her careful management and economy she was enabled to be liberal to the poor, whom she loved as brethren of Christ; those who were ashamed to ask alms, she supported secretly. During the time of a famine, which lasted for six months, the poor came a distance of even ten and twelve miles to ask bread from the kind lady, and it happened sometimes that persons who had received alms would present themselves again with those who had not yet been furnished with food. Jane perceived the deception, but instead of reproaching them, she gave them alms the second time, saying to herself: "O my Lord! every moment I beg before the door of Thy mercy; what would become of me if Thou didst permit me to come but once, refusing me the second time!" Jane having had so many applications for help, distributed all that she had with the exception of one bushel of flour, and still she continued her charity towards the poor. Thus the miracle which happened to the widow of Sarepta was repeated, so that the one bushel served for the use of the house, and for distribution to the immense crowds of poor persons who came every day. In her humility she attributed this miracle to the prayer of her pious servant Joanna.

Jane had only a few days previously given birth to a daughter, when suddenly the news reached her that her husband had been killed while hunting. She was now a widow, and though but twenty-eight years of age, she made a vow never to marry again, gave away all the splendid dresses she had formerly worn, and declared her intention of wearing mourning during her life.

Jane knew well that we cannot always be sure that our inspirations come from God, and as God administers the holy Sacraments through man, in like manner does He generally use man as a means to lead men on the path of salvation; she, therefore, prayed that she might obtain a good spiritual director.

When on a visit to her father in Dijon, St. Francis of Sales was invited to preach the Lenten sermons, and Jane was convinced that he was director appointed for her by Almighty God.

Jane one day received a letter from her father-in-law, an obstinate and eccentric old man, inviting her to come to Montholon to nurse him; if she refused he threatened to marry again, and disinherit her children. Jane obeyed, but the old man was completely under the control of a servant who was so insolent and rude to Jane that she was not allowed to give anything to the poor without the permission of this servant, who had five children, dressed like the children of Jane, and who ate their meals at the same table. Whenever the children quarreled, those of Jane were always accused of being in fault, and were punished by the servant, who meanwhile incited the old man against his saintly daughter-in-law. Jane endeavored to conquer the malice of the servant by even greater kindness; but all her efforts were fruitless, for the wicked servant reproached and insulted the noble lady. This state of affairs lasted seven years

and a half, and she who should have ruled, obeyed. Jane would never permit her children to boast of their nobility, but would say: "We are all brethren, for we have the same Father in heaven, and Christ died for the poor as well as for the rich."

The young widow had consulted with God and St. Francis about leaving the world entirely, when an advantageous offer of marriage was made to her, and it was only with great difficulty she could persuade her father and brother to allow her to refuse the offer, and to enter upon her new destiny. Her only son, in consequence of his violent grief at being separated from her, threw himself across the threshold, declaring that if she left him she would be obliged to step over his prostrate body, and Jane, in the conviction that it was the will of God, did so. She went to Annecy to see her holy spiritual director, and there with two other persons of high rank founded the order of the Visitation or Salesians; the latter name was subsequently adopted for the reason that the order was under the direction of St. Francis of Sales. Their object, besides leading a retired life, is to nurse the sick and poor, and instruct children. The order was introduced in many cities, and God blessed her work.

The beautiful life of this Saint is an admirable lesson for charity; as long as she was married, she gave according to her means, afterwards her charity attained the greatest perfection. The first sacrifice that charity exacted of her, consisted in giving up her will entirely to God, so that she made the vow to chose under all circumstances only that which was most pleasing to God. She sought in practicing charity not her own pleasure, but the faithful observance of the commandments of God, even if it caused bitterness and desolation to her heart. In the hall of the convent she had written the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh not evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (1 Cor. 13: 4–7.)

In one event of her life is wonderfully shown how closely the love of God is interwoven with that of our neighbor.

On the Feast of the Most Blessed Trinity she took a walk towards evening in the open air, when three very handsome youths came, and asked alms of her for God's sake. St. Jane had no money with her, but not willing to refuse their request, she took the ring which after the death of her husband she had taken from his finger, and gave it to one of them, saying that it was sufficient for the three, who then with graceful courtesy replied that it was sufficient to give it to one, for that the three were good friends, and while they were yet speaking, St. Jane was seized with an extraordinary conviction of the presence of God, so that she knelt down, and kissed the feet of the three youths, who permitted her to do so. They then disappeared, and St. Jane knew not whither they had

gone. From that moment such a tender love towards the poor remained in her heart that she vowed never to refuse an alms when asked of her in the name of God.

ST. SYMPHORIAN.

(August 22.)

"The true Mother"

UNDER the Emperor Aurelian the persecution of the Christians was so cruel that it was determined that even the Christian name itself should be extinguished. At that time Symphorian lived in the city of Autun; he was the son of a noble Christian family, and was distinguished for his great knowledge and piety. Heavenly wisdom and noble simplicity adorned his soul even in his youth.

Autun was still filled with pagan superstition, and temples erected to the honor of false gods, especially Berecinthia, Apollo, and Diana. Once a great crowd had assembled to celebrate the feast of Berecinthia, the mother of the gods. Heraclius, the governor, had the idol carried through the streets of the city on a magnificent car, accompanied by immense crowds of men, women, and children. When they saw that Symphorian did not bow down before the idol, he was at once arrested, and brought before the governor, who said to Symphorian: "Tell me your name and profession." The Saint replied: "I have already told you that I am a Christian; I worship the true God who is in heaven; an idol, however, I do not worship; and if you will allow me I will break it to pieces with a hammer." "He is not only a blasphemer," said the judge, "but also a seducer; examine whether he is a citizen." And when he discovered that the Saint was not only a citizen, but also of noble birth, the judge said: "Symphorian, it seems you rely upon your noble birth to save you, or else you are unacquainted with the decrees of the emperor; read them to him!"

After the decree had been read to him, the judge said: "Well, Symphorian, what do you say now? Can we disobey these decrees? You are guilty of two crimes: offending the gods, and despising the laws, and if you do not submit to the law, you must pay for it with your life." St. Symphorian replied: "I consider this statue as nothing but an infamous idol, and as a devil that ruins the State. A Christian who consents to sacrifice to it, brings down upon himself eternal damnation. As our God knows how to reward that which is good, in the same manner does He punish also that which is evil. In the belief in Him I remain firm, and shall thus reach the realms of the Eternal King; but I will not by the shipwreck of death fall into the hands of Satan."

The judge seeing that Symphorian would not obey his commands, had him scourged and thrown into prison, and when after two days the holy prisoner was brought before him, the judge said: "How much better would it be, Symphorian, if you would worship the immortal gods; you would be presented with money and a good office in the army. Kneel down then, and worship the adorable statues of the mother of the gods, and of Apollo and Diana. If you consent, we will adorn the altar with wreaths, and you can do homage to the gods by offering up incense and sacrifice. Make offerings, and you shall be richly rewarded." Symphorian answered: "Your presents are a mixture of poisoned honey, and might ruin a fickle soul; but my treasure is Christ, and cannot, therefore, be injured either by time or age. Your pleasures break like the glass, and the end of the world carries off every thing in the whirl of destruction. Our God gives true happiness; His glory is from eternity to eternity." The judge then said: "I have already with too much patience allowed you to talk of the greatness of Christ; if you refuse to offer sacrifice to the mother of the gods, you shall be tortured, and put to death." "I fear Almighty God," answered the Saint, "and I serve Him alone; you have my body in your possession but for a time, my soul, however, you cannot have." The judge then pronounced the following sentence: "Symphorian is guilty of treason, for he has refused to sacrifice to our gods, and has disgraced our holy altars; he shall, therefore, be beheaded, so that the abomination of his crime shall be atoned for, and the insults offered to the gods and the laws avenged." The Saint was now brought to the place of execution, and his venerable mother called out to him from the wall: "My son, remember the living God; lift up your heart, look up to Him who has made the heavens. To-day your life will not be taken from you, but changed for a better one, you will enter into life everlasting!" There exists a close relationship between mother and child, for the mother loves her child as much, if not more, than herself. If the mother is vain, she will dress her child richly, causing it to become proud; if she is weak, she will not punish her child, or see that it is usefully employed; but if the mother is a Christian, she will above all things attend to the soul of her child, she will correct it if it misbehaves, and will rather see it die than live to offend God; such a mother will encourage her son to die for God and religion.

Symphorian was carried outside of the city, and beheaded; the body was secretly carried away by the Christians, and buried near a wall, which place became afterwards so celebrated on account of the repeated and wonderful cures which happened there that even pagans held it in veneration, and a church was afterwards built over his grave.

ST. AZELINE.

August 23.

"Courtship."

THE mother of this saintly virgin was a relative of St. Bernard, and very pious; she daily prayed to God to take away all that kept her soul from a perfect love and union with Him.

Azeline, when a child, was distinguished for her intellect and virtue, so that St. Bernard and his brothers were astonished at her. Knowing that virginity was most pleasing to God, she made the vow of perpetual chastity; but remembering that all the resolutions of man are of no value without God's assistance, the pious girl fervently asked for His protection, and for perseverance in her determination. God seems to have kept her from even the least sin by His extraordinary providence. Azeline became more and more disgusted with worldly occupations and pleasures; her only joy was to converse with God, and as she was richly adorned with virtues, in the same manner did she possess an unusual beauty of person, which was to her as to so many others a cause of great danger. She once accompanied some friends to a place where wax-candles were manufactured for the church; a young man who desired to study for the priesthood, was present, and looking imprudently at the beautiful face of Azeline, fell in love with her. He sought and found an occasion to speak alone with her, and saluted her with sweet words, and feigned simplicity. Among other things he asked her if she would not like to learn how to sing by note, as he would most willingly give her lessons. While conversing with her, some persons entered the room, and he, therefore, left, but he soon sent her a letter and some poetry.

When he again found an opportunity to be alone with the virgin, he expressed himself more explicitly how much he loved her, and that she should love him also. In her child-like innocence she answered: "If you will leave the world, and become a priest, I will love you." The wicked man promised to study for the priesthood. This wolf in sheep-clothing entered a religious order, and endeavored for three months to ensnare this saintly virgin, when a beggar came, and revealed to her the wicked designs of her pretended friend, saying: "Be careful, daughter, Satan is lying in wait for you, and tries to destroy you by that religious." Like a dutiful daughter she told the whole affair at once to her mother; the beggar meanwhile was gone, and no one knew whence he had come nor whither he had gone, and, therefore, he was believed to be her guardian-angel.

It often has happened that very pious girls who intend to enter a convent or become sisters, afterwards become very worldly, and even wicked. It generally proceeds from the fact that such a girl receives unnecessary visits from

some young man whereby a sensual love is gradually awakened, so that God becomes a secondary consideration; many pious girls in this way have fallen low, and even lower than other frivolous persons upon whom they formerly looked with horror and contempt. Although no scandal is given, every courtship is to rejected, if there does not exist the *intention* and *prospect* of soon marrying, for the time of courtship is a time when persons are apt to commit grievous sins, if but inwardly by impure desires, and it is often also idolatry, because they think less of God than of the person whom they love. If, therefore, the first symptom of an improper love for a certain person commences to show itself, discontinue the friendship, and follow the advice of our Saviour: "If thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee with one to enter into the kingdom of God, than, having two eyes, to be cast into the hell of fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished." (Mark 9 : 46–47.)

Azeline, after this warning, dismissed the hypocrite for ever. He at once laid aside his religious habit, returned to the world, and led a very wicked life. Azeline was very prudent in future, and determined not to receive visits from any man, no matter how saintly his appearance might be. The mother and daughter afterwards resolved to live in seclusion.

The prayer of St. Azeline, and her only anxiety was to form herself entirely after the will of God; she watched above all things to preserve the innocence of her soul and body. She sometimes prayed the whole day, scourged herself seven times a day, and made at least eighty genuflections, in order to prevent her beauty from becoming a snare to herself or to others; she destroyed it by the most austere fasting, and by sprinkling ashes over her head; she cut off her beautiful long hair, and would not allow a wicked thought to enter her heart, but expelled them by prayer, work, or meditation. Once when worldly vanity troubled her more violently than over, and finding that the usual means were of no avail, she threw herself into a thorny bush in order to destroy the temptation by her sufferings.

Although Azeline never had an impure thought in her life, she was very much troubled as to whether she could be counted among the true virgins; for having listened to that wicked man so often, she thought that she might have been the cause of his leading such a wicked life. And when on another occasion she gave utterance to her anguish, Almighty God had pity on her, and consoled the poor soul. She saw St. John the Evangelist in a shining light, who said: "Persevere, my daughter, and combat, for you shall have your place and reward with the virgins of Christ."

Azeline entered the convent of the Cistercians, and was a perfect model to all the sisters. She possessed the gift of tears, and once she had a revelation that the tears shed from sincere devotion of the heart purify man like baptism, if he does not afterwards return to the vanity of the world. She daily, and sometimes twice a day, recited the Psalter; she said the Hail Mary a thousand

times on Saturdays and on the festivals of the Blessed Virgin. In her silence she was so strict that once, when silence was to be kept in the convent, she would not speak even with the daughter of the king of France, who had come to visit her.

If we remember the penitential life of St. Azeline, when she thought, but without any just cause, that her innocence was not perfect on account of her imprudence in her youth, what shall we think of those who for years have committed sins of impurity, and then believe that by a superficial confession, without true sorrow and repentance, they have made their peace with God!

Azeline became so renowned for miracles wrought at her prayers, that even the Archbishop of Cologne sent for her to free a woman possessed by the devil. She knew the day of her death one year previously.

ST. THEODORIC.

August 24.

"Power of Grace."

A son was born to a pious Belgian woman, who in baptism received the name of Theodoric. When he was seven years old, the parents disputed as to what state of life he should choose; the father wished him to be a soldier like himself, while it was the ardent desire of the mother that he should become a priest. It once happened that the child was severely burned upon his left shoulder and arm, so that the skin came off. Thinking the child would die, the mother lamented, saying that it was a punishment upon the father for not permitting his son to study for the priesthood. The boy soon recovered, and as the father happened to be absent, the mother sent him to the Latin school; but when her husband returned, and found where Theodoric was, he went to the school himself, and took him away. On the same day the boy climbed upon the roof, fell down, and broke his left arm. The father could no longer resist the reproaches of his wife, and he consented that Theodoric should be educated for the Church.

The boy was then sent to the monastery where his exemplary conduct awakened great hopes, and when a monk, he attained a high degree of perfection by imitating the virtues practised by every one individually; the humility of one, the charity of another, the fasting and watching of a third, and the perseverance in prayer of the fourth. When ordained priest, he served God with even greater

zeal. For the space of fifty years he never ate but once a day, and when sick he could not be induced to lay aside his penitential girdle. He was so well versed in the holy Scriptures that he knew them by heart; his prudence, knowledge, and capacity for teaching rendered him so distinguished that he was invited to direct the spiritual exercises in several convents.

On the death of Abbot St. Hubert, order and discipline had fallen into disuse, and the question now was how to introduce a better spirit among the brethren, to accomplish which no one was considered better fitted than Theodoric, who was, therefore, chosen Abbot, and he endeavored by example, persuasion, reproach, and punishment, by preaching and praying to convert the monks, but all seemed to no purpose; the wicked monks laughed at him, or openly resisted him; some there were in particular who, proud of their noble birth, distinguished themselves by disobedience, led on by a monk, named Lambert. Theodoric bore the many insults with patience.

We often hear the following judgment passed upon men like Lambert; "It is useless to try to do anything with him; he is wicked, and will remain so." There are even some priests who excuse themselves for the slight interest they take in great sinners. This, however, is not the spirit of Christianity, for the grace of God is powerful enough to soften even the most hardened heart. We must not despair of any sinner; for it often happens that a wicked sinner, when converted, becomes a better Christian than those who previously were of the belief that he was entirely in the power of Satan. If you know a wicked person, do not cease to exert your influence upon him by means of prayer and admonition; he may laugh or mock at you, but despair not; confide in the words of Christ: "With God all things are possible." So it was with Lambert, who was finally converted, and many other monks followed him.

When the disorders ceased, Theodoric desired to make a pilgrimage to Rome, which he accomplished with the utmost austerity. He was carried back in a dying state, but he forced his body to serve God, as he was accustomed to do in health. When asked to lay aside his penitential garment, he replied, rather indignantly: "In your desire to show mercy, do not be unmerciful to a man who is on his journey to Christ, whose servants it becomes to die in the penitential robe, and covered with ashes."

While the monks were standing around his bed weeping and sighing, he sat up, put on the stole, and gave them all the blessing and absolution, and having forgiven all those who ever had offended him, he said: "If you love me, you should rejoice that I go from work to rest, from misery to joy, as I hope through the mercy of God our separation will not be long. Mass was offered up in his room, and when the priest read the last prayer, he gave up his spirit, in the eightieth year of his age.

ST. LOUIS, KING OF FRANCE.

(August 25.)

"The Crusades."

KING LOUIS was once so ill that one of the nurses covered his face with the sheet believing him to be dead. The nurse, standing on the other side of the bed, thought otherwise, and would not allow him to be covered up, and while they were disputing, the king opened his eyes, and asked for the cross worn by the crusaders. When the king had recovered, it was proposed to release him from his vow of joining the crusaders, since he had been very sick, and perhaps not in his mind when he had made the vow. Louis removed the cross from his dress, and gave it to the Bishop of Paris, who had advised him to give it up; but he again asked for it, saying: "I now take it again, so that every one may know that I am in my right senses."

The king wrote to the Christians of Palestine that he would soon come to assist them, and he accordingly prepared for the crusade. His example was followed by his three brothers and the first men of his kingdom, so that they all determined to join the crusade. Louis gave all power to his mother, Queen Blanche, who had formerly ruled over France with great prudence during his minority, and he sent officers and priests throughout the whole land to ask if any one had complaints to make, as he desired to settle all quarrels before he left.

On the twenty-fifth of August, 1248, St. Louis embarked with his army, and landed safely on the island of Cyprus, where he remained during winter in order to wait for other crusaders. Meanwhile he spent the time in the practice of works of charity and peace, and when a plague broke out among the soldiers, he nursed the sick himself, giving them medicine, money, and consolation.

He also united the Latin and Greek Christians of the island, so long in discord, and he made peace between the military orders of the Templars and the Knights of St. John. In the Spring the king embarked again; eighteen hundred vessels were filled with crusaders; all were happy and confident of success with such an army, so many princes, and a saintly king as their leader. They first intended to attack the sultan of Egypt, and sailed towards Damiette, the principal fortress of the country, situated on the sea-shore; but the Egyptians were well prepared; the fortress was impregnable, and the shore was defended by a large army. Contrary to the advise of his generals, the king ordered that an attack should be made both by sea and land; he could not wait until the ship had landed, but jumped into the water, which even covered his shoulders. The crusaders were victorious everywhere; and the next day Christian slaves came to the camps announcing the fact that the Saracens, out of

despair, had burned the city. The king gave above all honor to God, and had a Te Deum sung, and then entered the city in procession with the Bishops and his nobles.

A horrible plague and famine broke out among the soldiers, and while the king was going around among the sick, nursing and consoling them, he himself was attacked by the same disease. The Christians, in this trying position of affairs, offered an armistice to the Saracens, who demanded the king as a pledge, and as the Christians would not accede to such a request, they retreated across the Nile towards Damiette, where they were attacked and defeated, and the king taken prisoner.

The Sultan demanded from the king that the Christians should give up some fortified places, but the king would not comply with his request, and when the Sultan found that nothing could be effected by threats, he proposed to free the king and his people if they would give up Damietta and about a million of guilders. When all was settled, the Mamalukes revolted, and put the Sultan to death. The king and a part of his army then embarked, and set sail for the Holy Land, where the Christians still occupied some fortified places, and he endeavored with his shattered army to conquer Jerusalem; but another misfortune befell him. The ship which was to bring the money from France to continue the war was wrecked; but when he heard of it, he said: "Neither this nor any other misfortune shall separate me from the love of Christ."

The king, after having spent six years in the war, received the news of his mother's death, and was now obliged to return to France; in a touching manner he bade farewell to the Christians, giving them many excellent and religious admonitions.

While the king was endeavoring to preserve peace and order among the high and low, and to further Christianity and temporal welfare among his people, the news arrived that Bondocdar, the leader of the Mamalukes, was warring most furiously against the Christians in the East, and murdered any one who would not deny the Christian faith. The king, therefore, determined upon a second crusade, and desired that his three sons, the oldest of whom was only twenty-two years of age, should join him. They sailed for Tunis, and on landing, suffered terribly from the excessive heat; at the same time the plague and other diseases broke out in the camp of the Christians, and the king's youngest son, Tristan, was one of the first to die. His death had been concealed for eight days from Louis on account of his own sickness, but after three weeks he was re-united with his son in the glory of a better kingdom. After having the previous day received the Blessed Sacrament, his lips did not cease praising Jesus Christ, and praying for his people and fellow-crusaders. He was heard repeating the following words: "Be, O Lord, a Saviour and Protector to Thy people," and "Let us despise the fortune of the world, and fear not its adversity." While slumbering, he would say: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem,

we go to Jerusalem!" When he felt that he was dying, he had himself laid upon a sack strewn with ashes, his hands crossed upon his breast, and his eyes turned towards heaven; at the same hour the Saviour died, the noble king, the true servant of God, St. Louis, gave up his spirit.

He had not been dead one hour, when the joyful sounds of trumpets were heard; for the brother of St. Louis, King Charles of Sicily, had just landed with an army to join in the crusade; but when he heard the sad news, he hurried to the tent, fell down on his knees, prayed, wept bitterly, and kissed the feet of his saintly brother Louis. Upon hearing of the death of the king, the Saracens thought that the Christians would be discouraged; they, therefore, made a desperate attack upon them, but they were routed and driven back with a loss of five thousand men. A second battle was equally unsuccessful to the Saracens, and the Christians could easily have taken the city of Tunis, when the Saracens sued for peace, which was granted them, especially since they accepted all the conditions, particularly that of allowing Christians to live in Tunis without being molested, to erect churches and religious houses, and to have the Christian faith preached. Thus St. Louis seemed to have assisted his own after death, and to have accomplished that which he could not obtain while living.

BLESSED MARGARET.

(August 26.)

"Traveling."

BLESSED MARGARET from childhood determined not to love anything earthly, sensual, or perishable, in order to possess more completely the friendship and favor of Christ, His Virgin Mother, and St. John the Evangelist.

God blessed this intention, so that until her death she not only remained free from evil deeds, but even from bad thoughts. It was in the convent of Florence that Margaret first felt the wonderful workings of God within her, although she tried to conceal them; but St. Humilitas, the Abbess, knew it by supernatural means. Almighty God seemed to have bestowed upon her besides other virtues especially the virtue of obedience. Once, when praying, Christ appeared to her great consolation, and Margaret said to Him: "I know well, my Lord, that I have no virtue of myself, but that I have to thank Thee for whatever I am or have, I now wish to know, my Lord, which virtue is the most

pleasing in Thy sight?" Christ answered: "It is obedience which you should practice without delay."

Margaret afterwards became Abbess, and as she was thus prevented from fixing her thoughts exclusively upon heaven, she besought the Lord that she might be locked up in a prison in order not to be further disturbed in her conversation with God. And Christ, appearing to her, said: "My daughter, it is My will that for the good of your convent you travel to different places, and give consolation also to others who come to see you."

Margaret contemplated daily the life of the Blessed Virgin, and also with special devotion the childhood of Jesus. It frequently seemed to her that the Mother of God had the child Jesus on her arm, presenting Him to her on her begging for Him, and that from delight at possessing Him she had nearly lost her senses. When the Mother of God asked for the child again, she refused to give it up until she had obtained some particular grace which she had asked for. In this manner she gained more and more graces. Christ appeared to her once, saying: "It is not right that you wish to taste only of my honey, and not of my myrrh also; if you desire to be perfectly united with me, consider the mockeries, insults, scourges, torments, and death, which I have suffered for you." Upon this admonition, Margaret endeavored to embrace the cross of Christ with her body and soul, and being absorbed once in this devotion, she saw the Saviour and all the instruments of His Passion; she saw his wounds as though freshly made, and the sacred blood flowing from them. While she with tears and affliction beheld the Passion of Christ, the Lord said to her from the cross: "Beloved daughter, because you meditate with so much grief and sorrow upon all my sufferings, I will grant you whatever you ask of me."

Margaret replied: "O my Lord, I desire nothing but Thy grace; I ask Thee to govern my tongue in silence and in conversation." The Saviour touched her tongue, and from that moment her words were filled with such wisdom and power that it seemed as if God Himself spoke through her.

You see, dear reader, what a beautiful life Margaret led hidden in Christ; although the visions she had are something extraordinary, and you should not wish to have the same. It is not uncommon for truly pious persons, who retire from all unnecessary intercourse with the world, and who think of no one with more delight than of Christ and His beloved mother, to experience in their devotion a great and wonderful joy, and receive many beautiful and heavenly thoughts and admonitions, of which the worldly-minded man knows nothing. Begin to lead a quiet and interior life in God, you will certainly see and know things, the equal of which you cannot find upon any journey through the finest country.

ST. JOSEPH CALASANCTIUS.

August 27.

"Instruction of Youth."

THE lord of a Spanish castle, called Calasanza, three hundred years ago had a son born who received in baptism the name of Joseph. The Christian parents gave the child a good education, and Joseph soon gave evidence of an active mind, a docile heart, and great love for religion.

Instead of amusing himself in an idle manner, little Joseph would place himself upon a chair, and preach and teach catechism, and in order to increase the number of his hearers, he would give trifling present to the poorer children. After a while his parents sent him to a neighboring city to study. There he had to suffer many insults from the wicked scholars, but by his firmness he at length gained their respect, and many finally imitated his example. Thus he made use of his noble birth and pious life to incite other students to the fear of God, and the performance of Christian works; for a young man can frequently by his words and actions have greater influence over others of his age than even clergymen, parents, or teachers. Joseph went to Valencia to study theology, where a young and noble widow became violently attached to him; but Joseph, imitating the example of his namesake of the old law, at once went to the church, made a vow of perpetual chastity, and asked the advice of his confessor, who told him to leave the city, and go to the university of Alcantara.

Young men are exposed to many temptations, but they will never lose their innocence, if, like Joseph, they make known the temptation to their confessor, and fly from the place of danger.

When the elder brother of Joseph died, his father insisted that he should marry, but Joseph was attacked by a dangerous illness, and the dying son implored his father to allow him to make the vow of becoming a priest, if Almighty God restored his health. The father consented, and in a few days Joseph recovered, and was soon ordained. Not long after, the father was taken very ill, and received the last Sacraments from his own Son.

The Bishop of Urgel had great confidence in the prudence and virtue of St. Joseph Calasanctius, and sent him to a wild country in the Pyrenees, where the people lived in great ignorance and vice. By his impressive admonitions he caused the priests to lead better lives, and roused the people from their slumber, so that when he was recalled, a new Christian spirit had returned to the former kingdom of Satan.

Joseph often heard a voice within him, saying: "Joseph, Joseph, go to Rome!" He considered it to be the effects of imagination, and said to himself: "What shall I do in Rome? I have no business there!" The inner voice,

however, gave him no rest; he also dreamt once that he found himself in one of the streets of Rome, surrounded by a troop of boys whom he instructed in catechism. By the advice of his spiritual director it was decided that he should go to Rome as a pilgrim. When in Rome, he first led a hidden and pious life; a letter, however, written by his Bishop in the highest commendation of him, made him known, and he was forced to accept the office of chaplain to Cardinal Colonna. He was then received in several sodalities, the obligations of which he faithfully fulfilled, such as to attend to the temporal and spiritual wants of the sick in their houses, to reconcile enemies, and to instruct neglected children in religion.

These and other spiritual duties confided to him, were a preparation for the future life to which God had destined him. He discovered that the principal reason of the depravity of man was caused by their ignorance of the Christian religion. He once met a troop of poor boys who behaved very badly, uttered wicked words, and fought each other. This increased his desire of applying himself to the instruction of youth. A parish priest whom he informed of his intention, offered him two rooms for that purpose, and two secular priests volunteered their services also in this most excellent cause. Thus these four pious men commenced a school for poor children, whose number daily increased so that they soon had nearly a hundred scholars.

The two secular priests, however, gave up teaching catechism, thinking that they could perform better and more meritorious works; Calasanctius knew that nothing was more pleasing to God than to take care of the souls of poor children, and, therefore, he declined to accept the office of Canon, and even refused the mitre. In place of the two assistants he received a Canon who was a nobleman, and a priest, ninety-four years old, who taught until his one hundred and twentieth year. Calasanctius rented a house where he, with his assistants, could live in community. The number of their scholars increased to nine hundred, and that of the teachers to eighteen. Calasanctius, besides giving spiritual instructions, attended also to menial occupations; he swept the school-rooms and the chapel, washed the benches and the windows, mended the pens, and prepared writing copies for the scholars.

Such good works, however, cannot be carried out without opposition; Calasanctius and his schools were often ridiculed and denounced, the investigation, however, which the Pope ordered to be made, served but to increase the respect for the Saint. The Pope would have created him a Cardinal, but Calasanctius was satisfied when his community was made an order of which he was the Superior.

The schools of his order increased so rapidly that they were erected not only in the Roman territory, but also in Moravia, Bohemia, and Poland.

The greatest opposition which Calasanctius had to meet with was from a haughty priest, named Marius, and it was the one that grieved him most. This

man, by his intrigues and calumnies, caused Calasanctius to be deposed from his office as General of the order, under the pretext that he had become imbecile from old age. Marius appointed himself General, and most cruelly insulted the venerable founder of the order, who was then eighty-six years old. Calasanctius submitted to this treatment as humbly as would the most ignorant scholar, and when others expressed their regret at his condition, he only said: "Let us leave all to God!" Pope Benedict XIV., therefore, called him the "true Job." God punished Marius with leprosy, of which disease he died impenitent. This wicked man had before his death made arrangements that one of his friends should be chosen General of the order, but he also died soon after of leprosy; before his death, however, he asked pardon of the Saint, who most cheerfully granted it to him.

Under the government of these Superiors the order of the Pious Schools was declining; many left, but Calasanctius never lost his courage. Although ninety-two years old, he instructed the children every day, and when they went to holy Communion, he would kneel in their midst, exhorting them with folded hands and weeping eyes to repent of their sins, and to prepare worthily. When dying, he besought the members of the order to instruct the children of the poor with indefatigable zeal. After his death his face looked fresher than in life, and his body emitted a sweet odor. St. Camillus, his friend, delivered the panegyric.

Although, dear reader, you may not be a priest, or belong to a religious order, you have it in your power to exert a happy influence over the souls of children or ignorant persons; you can ask them questions concerning the sermons or the catechism, you can tell them an instructive narrative, or read one for them, or else give them a good book to read, you can teach them a prayer or some pious sentence, you can speak of God or of their duty in different events of their lives. The soul of a child is a noble and precious field; whatever you sow or plant therein by good instruction, will bring forth frequently golden fruits which will afford to you a rich harvest in eternity.

ST. AUGUSTINE.

(August 28.)

"Pride of Learning

PRIDE and self-complacency are often found in those who possess beauty, riches, or rank, but more frequently in those who have acquired great learning. St. Augustine was one of the most extraordinary geniuses that ever lived upon earth, for which reason he was often and violently tempted by thoughts of his own importance, but, nevertheless, he is a glorious model as to how the true Christian should combat against such temptations. In the life of St. Monica, his mother (May 4), we have already spoken of this great Father of the Church, we will, therefore, continue his life from the time of his mother's death.

Augustine lived with two friends in strict seclusion, practicing his religion with great zeal, and here wrote several of his most celebrated works. Not far from his dwelling in Africa was the episcopal city of Hippo, whose Bishop, Valerius, had often prayed to God for a good priest. Augustine was once present in the church of Hippo, when Valerius spoke of the necessity of having an assistant in his office, when the people at once seized Augustine, and introduced him to the Bishop as the person best fitted for the dignity. Valerius ordained him, although Augustine considered himself unworthy to become a priest, and entreated the Bishop not to permit him to perform any of the functions of a priest before Easter.

When St. Augustine entered upon his duties, he preached the word of God with the greatest zeal; he wished rather to be understood by the people, whom he desired to make good Christians than to be praised by persons of rank or by the learned. He became once so confused in his sermon that he was obliged to change the subject, and when the priests afterwards mentioned it, St. Augustine said that God perhaps had caused him to become confused in order that he might speak of something by which one of the hearers might be converted. Soon afterwards a merchant came to him, and said that he had been brought back to the Catholic faith by the second part of his sermon.

Valerius, fearful lest Augustine should be made Bishop of another city, insisted, at a council of Bishops held in Hippo, upon having Augustine consecrated Bishop with the right of succession. Notwithstanding his refusal, Augustine had to submit to the decrees of the council. Valerius died soon after, and Augustine was compelled to remove to the Episcopal residence where, with the other clergymen, he lived in community. Upon the dinner-table he had written the following verses: "Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam, hanc mensam indignam noverit esse sibi." (He who slanders the absent has no place at this table.)

This great Saint would sometimes associate with unbelievers, and invite them also to dinner in order to have an opportunity to convert them; but with wicked Christians he always refused to dine.

We can easily imagine how a man who was at that time reckoned among the most distinguished of Christian writers, should be tempted to indulge in a feeling of self-complacency; St. Augustine confesses this himself, and declares he was constantly assailed by temptation, but that God knew the sighs of his heart, and the tears of his eyes. He often said that he knew nothing, and preferred to be guided rather by the opinion of others, and it grieved him to be respected for his learning. O what a difference, or rather what a contrast to what we see among ourselves! How often do we not observe persons of limited understanding presume to criticize learned works, sermons, and even priests, and then feel very much insulted if they are reproved for indulging in such remarks. Their pride is at once fired.

The most celebrated work of St. Augustine is his Confessions, in which he relates the sins of his youth, and invites Christians to pray for him.

At that time Pelagius and his followers promulgated the heresy that *grace*, although profitable, was not necessary to a Christian life and salvation, and that man was not sinful by nature. This opinion flattered pride (which is the effect of original sin), and it was very natural that proud men should cheerfully adopt this heresy. St. Augustine, however, proved with great clearness that all created beings are sinners, except the Blessed Virgin, that even the best men have faults, that virtue which does not proceed from supernatural grace can meet with temptation, but not with eternal reward, and that this grace by which each of our works is made meritorious, will be given to us, if we only wish to have it. This opinion of St. Augustine, which is a dogma of the Catholic Church, is pleasing only to those who have the spirit of humility.

In the time of St. Augustine, the heresy of the Donatists was widely spread (the Donatists maintained the opinion that any Catholic who joined them must be re-baptized) and its followers frequently committed the most cruel atrocities against good Catholics; thus, for instance, they very often laid Catholic priests upon benches, and would put unslaked lime, mixed with vinegar, upon their eyes, thus destroying their eyesight. St. Augustine endeavored by preaching, writing, and praying to destroy this horrible heresy; the Donatists, therefore, hated him, and tried to put him to death; they even declared that it would be a good work for any one to take his life.

We often see old men very anxious and zealous, lest they should lose their authority and power, even if their bodily and spiritual strength has become weakened, and they are very much opposed to seeing their place filled by a younger and stronger person. St. Augustine was never guilty of selfish motives. One Saturday he invited his congregation to come to church the next day, as he had to tell them something of importance, and when on the next day the people

were assembled together, he proposed a young man, named Heraclius, as his successor, whose virtues were already known, and who was most cheerfully accepted.

St. Augustine, now seventy-four years old, devoted his leisure to a great work of self-humiliation; he read and examined again all his numerous writings, and if he found any error therein, he openly confessed it without excusing himself, and corrected them. All these corrections he published in a book, called the book of retractations.

In his last illness, St. Augustine begged ten days before his death that no one should visit him, in order that he might not be disturbed in his preparation for death; he had a copy of the seven penitential Psalms placed on the wall, so that he could read them in his bed, and he would often recite them with many tears.

There is no Father of the Church whose writings are considered more important, or esteemed higher than those of St. Augustine. In his writings, however, he shows how he attained such a high rank in the Church; he says: "In vain do we endeavor to obtain true wisdom by a way different from that assigned us by Almighty God; if you ask me which of the commandments is the first, second, or third, I answer you '*humility*,' and as often as I shall be questioned I will give the same answer. By this, however, I do not wish to say that there are no other commandments; but if *humility* does not precede or accompany our good works, *pride* will tear them from us."

BLESSED ANTHONY OF RIVOLI.

(August 29.)

"Spirit of Penance."

WHAT we now relate happened in Tunis, in Africa, and was written down by a monk, at that time a prisoner, and an eye-witness of all.

"A certain brother Anthony of Rivoli, who in former years had belonged to the Dominican convent of Florence, was, in sailing from Sicily to Naples, captured by pirates, and, together with the other Christians who were on board the ship, taken to Tunis, on the sixth of August, 1468. After having been paraded through the public places of the city, they were put in the common prison. As we were together in the same prison, we had many friendly conver-

sations; he seemed to be well-behaved, as was becoming in a religious, but I thought he was deficient in the principal virtue of patience, for he was very much irritated at being confined in a prison. He, therefore, endeavored to obtain his parole, a privilege which the sultan allowed to such prisoners as could give security; some Christians assisted him, and he was allowed to reside in the city, where with the pecuniary assistance he received he could live comfortably; but he was still dissatisfied. It then happened on the sixth of April, either by the temptation of the devil, or by his own unbelief, that Anthony, in the presence of the sultan, denied the glorious name of Christ, and the holy Catholic faith. Like a Mahometan and a furious enemy of the Christian name, he for four months publicly insulted the Christian faith, and praised the false religion of Mahomet. Meanwhile, with the assistance of one who was well acquainted with languages, he commenced to translate the Koran into the Italian, and as he found nothing in the book but superstition, fables, and nonsense, he gradually returned to his senses; he acknowledged his error and his apostacy; the grace of God, who never rejects a repenting sinner, assisted him to be truly converted, so that, like St. Paul, who was first a persecutor of the faith, he determined to drink of the bitter cup of sufferings. First of all he sent away the woman he had taken to himself, said his breviary daily, and performed all his religious exercises, but only privately; for he had made the resolution to wait until the sultan had returned to the city, so that as he had denied the Christian faith before him, he would also before him declare his return to the Catholic Church. And, behold, the sultan arrived; Brother Anthony received the holy Sacrament, and then made a profession of faith before all the Christians who were present in the church on Palm-Sunday. After having resumed his habit, and had his head shaved like a monk, he joyfully hurried to the place where he was to meet the sultan, there to atone for his error by death, and publicly confess Jesus Christ in word and blood, as he had publicly denied him in word and blood. He went to the palace, and addressed the sultan who was surrounded by his ministers, and with intrepid courage and a clear voice confessed that he was a Christian, and was ready to die for his belief in Christ. The sultan was astonished at the firmness of the man, and tried to persuade him to return to the religion of the country, telling him that if he did not he should exchange the agreeable life, which he had led as a follower of Mahomet, for the most horrible of deaths. The Christian, however, remained firm, and was commanded to be sent to prison in order to be sentenced by the supreme judge. (Among the Turks the law even now exists that whosoever renounces his faith shall be beheaded.)

The next day he appeared again before the judge who first by flatteries and promises, but afterwards by threats of a terrible death, endeavored to make him again renounce the Christian faith; but Anthony used the same weapons against the judge which he had used against the sultan, on which he was sent back to

the prison with the threat that if within three days he did not publicly confess the religion of Mahomet, he would be put to death.

"On Holy Thursday, the soldier of Christ was again brought before the judge who, seeing that promises and threats were of no avail, pronounced sentence of death upon him. Arrived at the place of execution, Anthony took off his coat, and giving it to the executioner, said: "Keep it, that it may not be soiled with blood, for if you give it to the Christians you will receive a good price for it." He then asked for a little time in order to say some prayers; kneeling on the ground with hands lifted up to heaven, he prayed most fervently, while a great crowd of Christians looked on with astonishment; but while praying the executioners and many of the Mahometans commenced to be noisy and violent, attacking him at the same time with stones and swords. No one heard the Christian weep or lament; he never moved, although beaten and covered with stones, until finally, owing to the weight and number of the stones, he fell upon the ground, and gave up his spirit. The Turks then gathered a pile of wood, which they fired, and then threw the body of the martyr on to burn it; but the body lay for some time amid the flames, and, when taken out, not even a hair of his head or beard was burned."

If we have grievously sinned, dear reader, and by the grace of God have obtained pardon, His sanctity and justice require not only sorrow, but penance; this penance is twofold—that which is voluntary, and that which God imposes upon us. The latter consists in every tribulation sent us by God, if we only suffer it in the true spirit of penance. Let us then accept in the spirit of penance any affliction from God, and say: "O Lord, I will most cheerfully accept death with all its miseries, so that my sins thereby may be washed away, and Thy name be praised and sanctified before the heavenly spirits!"

ST. ROSE OF LIMA.

(August 30.)

"Hell."

In Lima, the capital of Peru, there lived a family of Spanish descent. Among the children was a girl who, even in her infancy, showed signs of possessing an extraordinary character. The child, when lying in the cradle, was never heard to cry; once, when a large box was about being closed her little thumb got between the lid and the box, so that her nail was badly mashed. Instead of

crying, Rose, who was then but three years old, concealed the hand until the nail festered, and was obliged to be lanced; but during this painful operation she did not even utter a sound. The two following years Rose suffered from a painful disease in the head which she endured with the greatest patience. Once, while playing with her brother, he threw some dirt on her hair, which displeased her very much, but the boy, with the gesture of a preacher, said: "Why are you so sensitive about your hair? Do you not know that a maiden's hair is one of the snares by which the devil catches the souls of young men?" Rose took these words in earnest, and, although but six years old, she cut her hair entirely off.

Rose was very beautiful, and her parents poor; hence it will be easily imagined how eagerly her mother accepted the proposal of a rich lady to betroth Rose to her son; but the saintly maiden would not listen to it; she sought in every manner to destroy her beauty, and when she refused to marry her wealthy suitor, she had to suffer the greatest insults and even blows from the family. In this respect she shared the fate of St. Catharine of Siena, whose steps she followed. The Archbishop desired Rose to enter a convent of poor Clares, but she preferred to remain in the world, and become a member of the third order of St. Dominic; in this she succeeded, and, taking the habit of St. Catherine, put on her character.

Her humility. Rose not only worked like a servant, but she also desired to be treated like a slave. If her mother and brothers insulted her, she did not excuse herself. She concealed her frequent indispositions as long as she could, and never complained, but declared that they were sent as a punishment for her sins. She was very kind and meek towards others; she was indeed a *rose* to others, but the *thorns* she reserved for herself.

Her mortification. In this she even excelled her model St. Catharine. When fifteen years old, she made a vow never to eat meat unless ordered to do so. Her food consisted of pieces of bread and bitter herbs, cooked in water without salt, and mixed with ashes; it is not known whether she mortified herself more by eating or fasting. She scourged herself every night so severely that spots of blood were seen on the wall, the floor, and on the clothes. She used the greatest care that the soul should not receive the slightest pleasure from the body. Under her veil she wore a threefold ring of metal around which ninety-nine nails were fastened with their points turned in, so that the least motion inflicted new wounds upon her head. Her couch consisted of boards, covered with knots of wood, pieces of brick and potsherds, so that her nature itself often shuddered when she laid herself upon her bed of martyrdom; she only slept two hours, and when otherwise sleepy, she kept herself awake by the most painful means.

Her devotion. Her whole life was a continued prayer, so that even when asleep, or at work, when walking, and while conversing with others, she directed the eyes of her spirit to God; she applied twelve hours every day to her devo-

tions, and as conversation with God was her greatest delight, she anxiously sought solitude. In the garden she had built herself a little chapel with an altar, and there she often spent whole days, and she received the grace that from this little chapel she attended in a supernatural manner all the holy Masses which were read in the neighboring churches.

In the last year of Rose's life every evening during Lent a little bird lighted upon a bough of a tree near the chapel, and would wait there to be asked by Rose to sing the praises of God. Rose sang a hymn, and then would invite the bird to sing the praises of their mutual Lord and Creator, when at once the bird would commence the hymn in a soft and melodious voice, its voice becoming louder and louder, until it ended in a beautiful trill. When it stopped, Rose would commence again, and then the bird would re-commence, its lovely tones would ascend higher and higher, until he seemed to pierce the clouds. Thus Rose and the bird would alternately sing the praise of God for an hour, when the bird flew away, returning the next day at the same time.

Her patience. Rose, after having attained great perfection, was for some time filled with such desolation of spirit that she knew not whether she was in hell or in purgatory. In such a manner she suffered daily for fifteen years the anguish of death. So insupportable was this inward pain that Rose begged the Lord to remove this bitter cup, but she added also: "Not my will, O Lord, but Thy will be done!"

Her love for God. Although Rose was careful to conceal the graces she received, and the virtues she practiced, she could not hide her love for God. It was her greatest happiness, in the company of others, to speak or hear of the love of God; she commenced her confession by saying: "God, our love!" The cross was to her a dear memorial of our Saviour. A spiritual light illuminated her face when she received holy Communion.

Her charity. Her greatest affliction was that there were so many pagans in America; she frequently begged several priests to go and announce the Gospel to them. The corporal works of mercy which the poor virgin practiced, were so numerous that at her funeral the poor loudly lamented and cried out: "Our mother and our support has died!"

Her confidence. Her favorite expression, which she constantly used, was: "O God come to my assistance; O Lord make haste to help me." (Ps. 69 : 2.) In regard to the necessaries of death, Rose showed the same cheerful confidence in God as when in danger of death, and she was, therefore, as liberal as if she had been very wealthy. She had been attacked by a disease which no one could understand, and when asked by her confessor to explain her sensations, she said that she felt as if a red-hot iron-ball was in her head, as if a spear was piercing her through, and as if a fiery sword penetrated her heart. All parts of her body were afflicted with inexpressible pains, and she felt as if her nerves were torn to pieces with red-hot pincers, and as if her jaw would break by every

motion of her mouth; she suffered a terrible thirst, and as the physicians would not allow her one drop of water, she declared that she could only find relief as Job did, in *patience*.

Many of our readers will be astonished at such sufferings; but "If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke 23 : 31.) If Almighty God could afflict this saintly virgin with such pains of body and such anguish of soul, He will not hesitate to condemn those who die in mortal sin. In considering the sufferings of St. Rose, you can imagine what you will suffer in purgatory or hell, if you do not endeavor in this world to be cleansed from sin.

St. Rose, when thirty-two years old, breathed forth her beautiful soul, repeating the first words which she had learned in her childhood: "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, be with me!"

ST. RAYMOND.

(August 31.)

"Suffering a Reward."

Born of a noble family in Spain, St. Raymond received a thorough education, and made great progress in his studies; but as his father perceived in him a decided inclination to become a priest, he sent him to a farm, where Raymond lived a very quiet and pious life in watching the flocks, and in daily performing his devotion before the statue of the Blessed Virgin, placed in a little chapel near by.

In consequence of an extraordinary circumstance attending his birth, he was called Nonnatus, that is, not born. One day, while again praying in the chapel, it seemed to him as if the Mother of God spoke to him, saying: "I adopt thee as my son." From that time he called the Blessed Virgin his mother, and said that he had no other, and that she would assist him to fulfil the will of God. He also recited the Rosary daily, and made the vow never to marry. After some time he was urged by an inward voice to enter the order of the Blessed Virgin, founded by St. Peter Nolasco, in which every one is bound to keep the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and to risk their lives to free Christians from Mahometan bondage. By divine providence he obtained permission from his father, and went to Barcelona, where the mother-house of the order was established.

Raymond, after having finished his novitiate, was ordained a priest. He

frequently preached at Barcelona with great effect, for the reason that he practised himself whatever he preached. The desire of his heart was finally gratified; he was sent to Africa to ransom Christian slaves, and as he had no more money to ransom Christian slaves who were most cruelly treated, and in danger of denying Christ, he, moved by Christian mercy, offered his own person as ransom for them. This zeal and magnanimity of Raymond irritated the Mahometans, for they would have put him to death, if the authorities had not forbidden it for fear of losing the ransom. As he was permitted to walk about the city of Algiers, he visited the imprisoned Christians, and consoled and strengthened them in their faith.

Some Mahometans were baptized by him, and as this became known, Raymond was sentenced to be roasted alive upon a spit; but as those in whose custody he was would have lost their ransom, they effected a commutation of the sentence, so that instead of being put to death he was scourged. He, notwithstanding, continued to encourage the Christians, and to preach the Gospel to the pagans with such success that ten rich Jews and two Mahometans of high rank were converted and baptized. The civil authorities of Algiers now became so enraged that they had him taken to every corner of the streets and scourged; on the market-place his lips were pierced with a red-hot iron, and a padlock placed upon them so that he could not speak; he was then thrown into prison where he lay for eight months in chains; the lock on his mouth was opened only when he ate his food, consisting of bread and water. The order at length collected the necessary ransom, and sent some brothers to Africa to free St. Raymond. Meanwhile Pope Gregory IX. had made him a Cardinal, and when he landed in Spain, the Count of Cordova had his own palace prepared for him; Raymond, however, accepted nothing, but went at once to the convent where, notwithstanding his great dignity as Cardinal, he lived as poorly as the least of the lay-brothers. One day in winter it rained very hard in Barcelona, when Raymond met an aged man whose head was uncovered and exposed to the rain and cold; Raymond, filled with compassion, immediately took off his own hat, and put it on the head of the poor old man. After he returned home, he commenced, as usual, to pray, when he fell into an ecstacy. It seemed to him as if he was led into a most beautiful garden where he saw the glorious Queen of Heaven, accompanied by many virgins, gathering a variety of flowers, and making a beautiful wreath of them, saying: "He who has given his hat to the poor old man is worthy of this wreath." Raymond answered that he did not wish a wreath of flowers as a reward for his deeds, but Jesus Christ, when presently he saw Christ wearing the hat which he had given the poor man, standing before him. The Lord had at the same the crown of thorns and the wreath of flowers in His hands, offering both to him. Raymond begged for the crown of thorns, and it was given to him. He recovered his consciousness, and from that time he suffered from a pain in his head that never left him.

The Pope desired to have so holy a man near him in order to consult him Raymond was, therefore, called to Rome, but he had hardly set out upon hi journey, when he died at Cordova at the age of thirty-six, and as he had alway been regarded as a Saint, the people commenced to quarrel for the possessio of the body. The princes of Cordova wished his remains to be deposited in th city where he had died, while the clergy of Barcelona claimed him, because h was made a Cardinal in their city, and his convent also demanded his body, be cause he belonged to their order. While thus disputing, a simple man made proposition to put the coffin upon a wagon drawn by a blind mule, and tha wherever it would carry the coffin, there the body should be deposited. Thi proposition was accepted, and the blind mule ran for a distance of several miles followed by an immense crowd; the mule finally stopped, just before the chape which Raymond in his youth had daily visited while watching the flock. Fifteer years later (1255) a convent of his order was erected on the spot, and his relic are still kept there for veneration.

There is one thing which the world cannot understand, but which to the tru Christian is a beautiful and profound mystery. It sometimes happens that on who loves Christ is for a good deed rewarded by the Lord with suffering an affliction. You have seen this, dear reader, in the life of St. Rose, and also to day in the life of St. Raymond; for because of his love for God and his neigh bor the Lord permitted him to be cruelly treated in Algiers, and for an act o charity done to a beggar in the street, Raymond accepted a crown of thorn instead of a wreath of flowers. Sufferings are very precious goods for eternity if we bear them like Christians. If you are in sins, they wash away the stain of the soul; they are a kind of purgatory. If you have no penance to perform for grievous sins, they are also like rare ornaments of pearl, which you can tak with you even beyond the grave, and with which you will be adorned in heaver over the possession of which you will rejoice in eternity.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

PENTECOST-CYCLE CONTINUED.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—PS. 73.

"Have regard, O Lord, to thy covenant, and forsake not, to the end, the souls of thy poor: Arise, O Lord, and judge thy cause, and forget not the voices of them that seek thee. O God, why hast thou cut us off to the end? Why is thy wrath enkindled against the sheep of thy pasture?" Glory be to the Father.

From this to the twentieth Sunday after Pentecost the Church proposes to us, in the different parts of the Mass, how Christians in general should live to obtain eternal happiness as their portion hereafter, and for this reason the Epistles and Gospels of these Sundays instruct us on the perfect life of the sanctified members of Christ.

The Introit of the Mass of to-day can serve as the model of an humble and devout prayer, offered by one who, with a contrite heart, confesses his own unworthiness, that amid the dangers, temptations, and adversities of the world he may obtain the powerful assistance of God, and, thus strengthened, obtain heaven.

PRAYER.

O Almighty and Eternal God, grant to us an increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may deserve to obtain what Thou promisest, make us love what Thou commandest. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Galatians 3 : 16–22.

"Brethren: To Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed. He

saith not, 'and to his seeds,' as of many: but as of one, 'And to thy seed,' which is Christ. Now this I say, that the testament which was confirmed by God, the law which was made after four hundred and thirty years, doth not disannul, to make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise. But God gave it to Abraham by promise. Why then was the law? It was set because of transgressions, until the seed should come, to whom he made the promise, being ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not of one: but God is one. Was the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could give life, verily justice should have been by the law. But the Scripture had concluded all under sin, that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

The Epistle of to-day is, as it were, an introduction to the contents of the Epistles of the following Sundays, and command us to adhere to the testament of grace which alone possesses the promises of God already made to Abraham; the covenant of grace (the new law) is, therefore, according to the promise older than the covenant of the law, and cannot be disannulled (by the old law). The old covenant was not at variance with the promises of God, it assisted the operations of divine grace by leading man to the knowledge of the sin, which he committed in transgressing the commandments, by the faithful observance of which the precepts of the law can alone be fulfilled. Justification was not accomplished by the mere typified law of the old covenant, but by a living faith in Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL.—Luke 17 : 11-19.

"At that time: As Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain town, there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off; and lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, master, have mercy on us. Whom when he saw, he said: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean. And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell on his face, before his feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said: Were not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger. And he said to him: Arise, go thy way, for thy faith hath made thee whole."

In the Gospel of to-day we have a striking example of man's ingratitude to God in return for the great benefits he has received. Out of TEN persons whom Christ cured in a moment by a wonder of His omnipotence from a most horrible disease, only ONE returned, and gave thanks, while the other nine forgot to give

glory, so that our Saviour Himself clearly and emphatically expresses His just indignation at such conduct. The words of this Gospel, however, may be interpreted in a more spiritual meaning. As the deaf and dumb, when cured, and the Jew, when saved by the Samaritan, are types of man sunk in sin and misery, so, too, are the ten lepers figures of men afflicted with that most terrible disease, sin, who, through Christ's mercy and love, are received back among the children of God by the holy Sacrament of Penance, the administration of which He has confided to the priests of His Church. Christians, also, who have been cleansed through the Saviour's mercy and love from all their sins, are sometimes as ungrateful as the nine lepers spoken of in the Gospel, for they are barely freed from the guilt of sin, when they forget Him who has forgiven them, and scarcely cured from their spiritual leprosy, they soon sin again, and perhaps more grievously.

St. Bernard, speaking of the ingratitude of the lepers after they were cleansed, says: "We see many even in the present time importunately ask for what they acknowledge themselves in need of; but we find very few who give thanks for the benefits received. Although we are not to be reproached, because we ask God unceasingly for what we desire, still our prayer loses its efficacy if we prove ungrateful. You see, therefore, that it is not profitable for all to be freed from the leprosy of worldly corruption or from public sin, since ingratitude thereby obtains secret growth in the heart, which is the more dangerous the more it is concealed. And justly did our Saviour ask where the nine were, for SALVATION IS FAR FROM SINNERS. (Ps. 118 : 155.) In the same manner did the Lord ask the first man after he had committed sin: 'Where art thou?' (Gen. 3 : 9) and in like manner has He declared that He would not know the sinner in judgment. (Matt. 25 : 12.) The same we read in the Psalm: 'The Lord knoweth the way of the just, and the way of the wicked shall perish.' (Ps. 1 : 6.)"

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 83.

"BEHOLD, O God, our protector, and look on the face of thy Christ; for better is one day in thy courts, above thousands. How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord." Glory be to the Father.

By these words the royal Prophet expresses the longing of the just after the tabernacles of God, after a union with Him, and in general after spiritual and heavenly things. The Catholic Church endeavors to excite this longing not only in the Introit, but also in the Epistle and Gospel of to-day, among her faithful children who are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and who are called to partake in the Kingdom of God.

PRAYER.

Preserve Thy Church, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with perpetual mercy, and since without Thee mortal man goes astray, may we be ever withheld by Thy grace from what is hurtful, and directed to what is profitable. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Gal. 5 : 16–24.

"Brethren: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit: and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary one to another: so that you do not the things that you would. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury, idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkeness, revellings, and such like. Of the which I foretell you, as I have foretold to you, that they who do such things, shall not obtain the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is, charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences."

The Church earnestly exhorts us in this Epistle to walk IN SPIRIT as members of the sacred body of Christ, that is according to the spirit of the law, and not according to its dead letter, and to avoid, therefore, the evil to which the concupiscence of the flesh incites us. The Apostle calls our attention to the constant combat between THE FLESH, that is of the evil inclinations dwelling within us in consequence of original sin, and OF THE SPIRIT, that is of the good inclinations, enlightened and animated by the spirit of God; he then enumerates the principal effects of these two antagonistic powers; he speaks of the sinful and detestable works to which the lust of the flesh incites us, and also of the beautiful virtues which are the fruit of the divine spirit dwelling within us, and of our moral strife, faithfully co-operating with God's grace.

Cassian, speaking of this struggle, says: "The flesh delights in lust and excesses, the spirit yields not even to the desires of nature; the former wishes to be fed with sleep, and to be filled with food, the latter, however, fattens on watching and fasting, so much so that it does not even permit as much sleep and

food as is usual and almost necessary for life; the former longs after an abundance of all goods, while the latter does not even wish to eat the daily portion of a frugal meal; the former desires to appear always in splendor, and delights in being constantly surrounded by flatterers, the latter takes pleasure in a certain outward carelessness, and in an impenetrable seclusion; the former seeks honor and laudations, the latter rejoices in receiving injuries, and in being persecuted by others."

In conclusion the Apostle, in harmony with what he had previously said in reference to the fatal effects of yielding to evil inclinations, emphatically declares that those who desire to belong to Christ, must suppress and curb, or crucify, as it were, their flesh, together with the vices and concupiscences, that is they must, even if they should suffer the most intense pain by resisting their sensual inclinations, entirely destroy its fatal effects by depriving it of nourishment, and by practicing works of mortification and self-denial. In this sense St. Augustine says: "The whole life of a Christian, if he wishes to live according to the Gospel, must be a continual mortification and martyrdom; during his whole life he must hang on the cross. 'He that loveth his life in this world,' says the Son of God, 'keepeth it unto life everlasting;' (John 12 : 25) but we love our life in a two-fold manner—either we die as martyrs, or we crucify our flesh as penitents."

GOSPEL.—Matt. 6 : 24–33.

"At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."

The Gospel of to-day contains one of the most beautiful instructions given

by Christ in His sermon on the mount, as to the only solicitude worthy of a Christian. The Church earnestly admonishes us to govern, as becomes Christians, the lust of the flesh, and avoid sin and vice, that, separating our heart from all earthly things, we may in truth direct our attention to the Kingdom of God, to the eternal and heavenly goods which alone have a true and lasting value, and also to the practice of Christian justice, by which alone we can obtain the possession of the eternal goods of heaven.

Our Saviour first of all warns us against the danger of indulging in too great a desire for temporal goods, as they are often the means of turning man from God, and of subjecting him to the servitude of Satan. Our Saviour tells us that as we cannot at one and the same time serve two masters, who are opposed to one another, that it is impossible for us to serve God and mammon, that is the idol of riches, since the demands of both masters are of a directly opposite nature.

In order to warn us more and more against an immoderate desire after the goods of this world, and to encourage us to strive zealously for the only true goods of heaven, our Saviour proposes to us the very consoling doctrine of the divine Providence of God. He calls our attention to the fact that all our own efforts are of no avail, that of our own strength we can accomplish nothing, but that God, our heavenly Father, who provides for the wants of all his creatures, even for the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, provides the more for us, His children, preserving our body and the life which He has given us.

Our Saviour, by dwelling on this doctrine of divine Providence, by no means forbids a reasonable solicitude for temporal welfare, nor does He counsel us to be idle; it is according to the express doctrine of the holy Scripture our duty to work, and provide for our support. Christ Himself labored until His thirtieth year in the shop of His foster-father Joseph, and St. Paul, who also obtained his subsistence by manual labor, expressly says: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." (2 Thessal. 3 : 10.) We should only not be too solicitous for our temporal wants, as though they were of inestimable value; our principal care and solicitude should rather be directed to the obtaining of the joys of heaven, and then will the Lord, as a reward of our good and pious endeavors, bless also our earthly labors, and provide us at least with that which we need most.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—PS. 85.

"Bow down thine ear, O Lord, to me and hear me; save thy servant, O my God, that trusteth in thee; have mercy on me, O Lord, for I have cried to thee all day. Give joy to the soul of thy servant, for to thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul." Glory be to the Father.

The fervent prayer which the pious King David once offered up to God for assistance against his enemies, the Church now proposes to us, so that we also, assisted by the Almighty, may overcome our enemies, and thus obtain the glorious crown of victory in the kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER.

May continued mercy purify and defend Thy Church, O Lord; and since without Thee it cannot remain safe, may it ever be governed by Thy bounty. Through Christ our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Gal. 5 : 25, 26; 6 : 1–10.

"Brethren: If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be made desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, and if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens: and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ. For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every one prove his own work, and so he shall have glory in himself only, and not in another. For every one shall bear his own burden. And let him that is instructed in the word communicate to him that instructeth him, in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap. For he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, of the spirit shall reap life everlasting. And in doing good, let us not fail. For in due time we shall reap, not failing. Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

This Epistle is intimately connected with that of last Sunday; it contains a continued admonition of the Apostle to govern our passions and to walk in the spirit, in order to bring forth in ourselves the fruits of the spirit. The Apostle, however, exhorts us in particular to be strict with ourselves, and to be meek

and forbearing with others, but at the same time to be zealous in the performance of good works.

In our conduct towards our erring brethren we should correct them only in the spirit of meekness, and mindful of our own frailty, take heed lest we fall into the same snare. St. Augustine makes the following remarks on the words of St. Paul: "We should never undertake to reprove the sins of others unless we first ask ourselves, and can sincerely answer before God that what we do we do out of charity."

The same great doctor of the Church proposes the three following rules to be observed when reproving others:

1. We should consider whether we have never committed the same sin ourselves, or if it is not one from which we have been delivered; if we have never committed it we should be mindful that we are men, and might, if similarly tempted, have fallen into the same sin.

2. If we have committed the sin, and are free from it now, let us be mindful of human frailty, that not hatred but compassion may precede the admonition, so that we are sure of being sincere whether our admonition is heeded or not.

3. If we have, however, committed the same fault, we should not reprove, not reproach him, but sigh with him, and invite him to avoid the snare from which we have ourselves escaped.

By the words "*Bear ye one another's burdens,*" the Apostle indicates that every one has his burden to bear, that is his own imperfections, faults, and sin. "For," he adds, "if any man think himself to be something, that is, if he believes himself to be without fault, or of himself capable to preserve himself from sin, he deceiveth himself." "Sin," says St. Basil, "is a heavy burden oppressing the soul, nay, pressing it down into hell; this burden we assist one another to bear as often as we endeavor to raise those who have sinned and fallen."

The Apostle then, in order to excite us more to the practice of meekness and mercy towards the faults of others, reminds us that *every one shall bear his own burden*, that is, that in judgment we will not be asked whether we are better or worse compared with others, but rather how we have co-operated with divine grace, or transgressed the commandments of God, and offended Him by sin. St. Jerome says: "You, who consider yourself spiritual, and stronger than the weak, must not consider the feebleness of the one who is conquered, but rather your own strength; for if a man cannot become perfect in a moment, who has just been converted from Judaism to Christianity, it is no reason why you should pride yourself on being a perfect Christian; but if your own conscience does not accuse you, you will find satisfaction in yourself, and not in any one else. A gladiator is not strong, because he overcomes a weak man; if he be strong, he will glory in his own strength, and not in the feebleness of others."

GOSPEL.—Luke 7 : 11–16.

"At that time: Jesus went into a city that is called Naim; and there went with him his disciples, and a great multitude. And when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow: and a great multitude of the city was with her. Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her: Weep not. And he came near and touched the bier. (And they that carried it stood still.) And he said: Young man, I say to thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. And there came a fear on them all: and they glorified God, saying: A great prophet is risen up among us: and God hath visited his people."

The Church presents to us in the Gospel of to-day the sublime example of our divine Saviour, assisting on every occasion suffering and oppressed humanity with His omnipotence and mercy; for as the resuscitation of the youth of Naim is a beautiful type of the spiritual resuscitation of the sinner through our Lord's benignity, so does she point out His love and mercy to those who have fallen into sin, whom He, the good shepherd, treats with such meekness and forbearance, and whom He in every way endeavors to lead back to penance and amendment, and, consequently, to the way of salvation.

The holy Fathers of the Church regard the mother weeping over her deceased son, and having him restored to her by our Saviour, as a type of our holy Church, who, as her bridegroom Jesus Christ is absent in body, and is only visible to the eyes of faith, may be considered as a widow weeping over the spiritual death of her children, caused by sin, but who finds them restored to her again through the mercy of Christ.

"The mother, the widow," says St. Augustine, "rejoiced over the resuscitated youth of Naim, and MOTHER CHURCH also rejoices over all who are daily resuscitated spiritually from the grave of sin. The former died corporally, but the latter spiritually. The death of the youth was visible, and was, therefore, visibly mourned; the death of sinners is invisible, and they are, therefore, neither seen nor sought for. He, however, sought them who knew those that were spiritually dead, and He alone knew the dead who could restore them to life; for if the Lord had not come to give life to those who are spiritually dead, the Apostle could not have said: 'Rise thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten thee.' (Ephes. 5 : 14.)" In the same sense St. Ambrose says: "Like the youth of Naim, so also do we lie dead, as it were, on the bier, whenever the fire of immoderate lust arises within us, or coldness (of love) fills our heart, or when our slothful body paralyzes our spiritual power, or the light of our faith is extinguished by the increasing weakness of the spirit; for these act as the bearers of our body. If, however, all hope of life has disappeared, and the bodies are near the grave, they rise at the word of God, the

voice returns, the son is given back to his mother, after being resuscitated and freed from the tomb. Your sins are the tomb in which you lay, unfaithfulness is your grave, your throat is the sepulchre, for as it is written (of the wicked): 'Their throat is an open sepulchre' (Ps. 5 : 11), from which proceed words of death. From this grave Christ will deliver you, from this sepulchre you will rise if you hear the word of God. And if your sins are so grievous that you cannot wash them out with your own tears of sorrow, let your mother, the Church, weep for you, for she is as solicitous for all her children as the widow was for her only son. She is filled with compassion and spiritual grief if she sees the souls of her children mortally wounded, and a prey to death. Let this kind mother, therefore, weep for you, and all the faithful will take part in the compassion which she has for you; then you will rise from the grave of sin, and be freed from the fetters of (spiritual) death."

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 85.

"Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I have cried to thee all the day; for thou, O Lord, art sweet, and mild, and plenteous in mercy, to all that call upon thee. Bow down thy ear to me, O Lord, and hear me, for I am needy and poor." Glory be to the Father.

These words are taken from the same Psalm as was the Introit of the Mass of last Sunday, and they also contain the fervent prayer of a man who, in the acknowledgment of his own weakness and helplessness, implores the assistance of God against the enemies of his salvation.

PRAYER.

May Thy grace, O Lord, ever precede and follow us, and make us ever intent upon good works. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Eph. 3 : 13–21.

"Brethren: I pray you not to faint at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened by his Spirit with might unto the inward man. That Christ may dwell by faith in your hearts: that being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to comprehend, with

all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth. To know also what is the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand, according to the power that worketh in us: to him be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations, world without end. Amen."

St. Paul, in referring to the dangers and tribulations which he had suffered for the sake of the Gospel, exhorts the faithful of Ephesus to confidence in God, and reminds them that adversities are no sign of divine displeasure, but are rather to their glory; that they should be strengthened in their faith, and should have greater confidence in the Almighty. He then declares that he would always in humility implore God, the Creator of all things, the Father of all men, in their behalf, so that, enlightened and strengthened in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and rooted and founded in charity, they may be able to comprehend the breadth, and length, and height and depth of divine love. This expression first refers to the mystery of redemption through Christ, which deserves by excellence to be called the mystery of love, because by it is revealed the infinite love of God to man. The BREADTH of this mystery is the extent of this love, reaching from one end to the other, that is, it refers to all men redeemed by Christ; the LENGTH is its origin and duration—it has been decreed by Almighty God from eternity, and lasts through all time, and extends even to eternity; the HEIGHT is its superiority over all human knowledge, and the DEPTH is the fact of its penetrating even the realms of death, not only of spiritual death, that is, reaching those who by their sins yet lie in the abyss of misery, but also of bodily death, because Christ descended into hell to preach to those spirits who were in prison. (1 Pet. 3: 19.) St. Bernard says: "We comprehend this by fear and love; love corresponds with the breadth and length, and fear with the height and depth; for we comprehend the length by perseverance, the breadth by charity, the height, that is the majesty by veneration and worship, the depth, that is the wisdom and profundity of His judgments by humility and fear. To this correspond the fourfold manner of meditation: the length comprises the meditation upon the promises, the breadth the consideration of benefits, the height the intuition of the majesty, and the depth the understanding of His judgments."

The Apostle declares the charity of Christ to surpass all knowledge, that is never comprehended in its full extent by created beings; and, indeed, who can understand the infinite love of Him who willingly died for the sins of the world, and who nourishes mortals with his own flesh and blood in the Holy Eucharist, thus uniting them with Himself!

St. Ambrose very appropriately says: "After obtaining a knowledge of the infinite love of God the Father, and His inexpressible kindness, the Apostle desires us also to know the charity of Christ, which surpasses our understanding;

for who can comprehend the nature of this mystery of love that God for the sake of man should become man, that He died for man, He, the Lord, for the servant, the Creator for the creature, the Holy for the unholy."

GOSPEL.—Luke 14 : 1-11.

"At that time: When Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees, on the sabbath-day, to eat bread, they watched him. And behold there was a certain man before him that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying: Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day? But they held their peace. But he, taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, he said: Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the sabbath-day? And they could not answer him to these things. And he spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them: When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honorable than thou be invited by him: and he that invited thee and him, come and say to thee, Give this man place: and then thou begin with shame, to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go; sit down in the lowest place: that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee: Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee. Because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

The Gospel of to-day warns us against indulging in the hardness and uncharitableness of the pharisees, which was also accompanied by pride, and concealed under the appearance of obeying the law.

According to the words of this Gospel, our Saviour accepted the invitation of one of the chief of the pharisees to eat bread with him, although he belonged to His enemies, and although other pharisees were present to watch whether they could not find something against Him; for Christ wished to profit by this occasion in order to give them some wholesome advice which might bring forth good fruits, if not in all, at least in some of them. It was the Sabbath, and as there was present a sick man who desired to be healed, our Saviour showed by healing him that a work of Christian charity, even when performed on the Sabbath, was not contrary to the sanctification of this holy day, but rather that we should practice not only the third commandment of keeping holy the Sabbath-day, but the others also, in the spirit of that one great commandment in which are included all the others, that of CHARITY.

Our Lord also instructed His hearers, when He saw their pride and their endeavors to obtain the first seats at the table, on another important subject: HUMILITY, the foundation of all virtue, and the absolute condition for obtaining true greatness before God, our heavenly Father. Whatever Christ says of the

humility and modesty to be observed at a worldly feast, refers in a higher sense to the heavenly feast, to which we, like the Jews, are invited, that is to the KINGDOM OF GOD. By having received the true faith, we are invited to this heavenly feast; but for this reason we should not exalt ourselves, as though the first place in the Kingdom of God belonged to us; we should rather hold back, and allow our place to be given to others whom the Lord considers to be more worthy than we. We should, therefore, although called to the knowledge of the true faith, and to the hope of eternal happiness, still remember our own sinfulness and unworthiness, humble ourselves, and consider ourselves as less than others; for then only can we hope to have glory before God, and to be exalted by Him when partaking of His feast in heaven. Thomas a Kempis says: "If thou wouldst acquire knowledge, and learn anything to the purpose, love to be unknown, and to be esteemed as nothing. The highest and most useful lesson we can learn is this—to know truly, and to look down upon ourselves. To think nothing of ourselves, and always to judge well and highly of others, is great wisdom and high perfection."

LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

BLESSED PETER ARMENGOL.

(September 1.)

"Eternal Happiness."

As St. Peter Armengol belonged to one of the most distinguished families of Catalonia, he was very proud of his noble descent, and openly showed his contempt for other young men whom he did not consider his equals. His conduct made him many enemies, and, six hundred years ago, such enmities generally ended in violence and murder. To terrify and punish his enemies, Armengol collected a band of lawless men. These men, believing Peter's favor a shield, openly committed every kind of crime, such as robberies, murders, and adulteries. The outrages increased to such a degree that the city of Cervera and the surrounding places could endure them no longer. To avoid punishment, the whole band then fled to the mountains, and organizing themselves, made Armengol their captain. Thus the proud, wealthy, and noble youth became an object of horror to all honest and good men, a criminal who deserved the gallows. Such depravity is often the consequence of pride.

Arnold, his father, could not bear up under the disgrace which had befallen him and his family by the conduct of his own son; he therefore left Catalonia, and went to Valencia, where he offered his services to King James of Arragonia, which offer was willingly accepted. It happened, after some time, that an interview was proposed between James of Arragonia and the King of France, and as the place of conference lay beyond forests infested by robbers, Arnold was commanded to go and clear the road for the king and his suite. The robbers were followed to their dens, and there Arnold met one of the robbers in deadly combat, but in a moment the bandit fell on his knees before Arnold, and offered him his sword and his life. It was his own son Peter, who had recognized his father. That wonderful meeting was the commencement of a perfect conversion.

A truly penitent person is not satisfied, after having committed many crimes, with being sorry for his sins; he also confesses them, and promises never to commit them again; he is determined to do this, and to suffer more than other Christians. Peter Armengol entered the same convent to which St. Raymond (August 31) belonged; his former cruelty was changed into a fiery love. He went twice to Africa to ransom Christian slaves. During his third visit his money gave out. Filled with compassion, he offered himself to the Mahometans as a prisoner until the brother who had accompanied him would return from Spain with the requisite money.

The time in which the ransom was to be paid, arrived, but no Brother William appeared. After some months, however, he arrived, and to his horror heard that Armengol had been condemned to death, because the money had not been paid in time, and that he had been hung some days before. William, filled with grief, and weeping over the death of the good brother, went to bury him, when, in loosening the rope from the neck, he found to his great astonishment that Armengol was still alive. "Dear brother," said he, "weep not, for I have been preserved through the assistance of the Blessed Virgin." Filled with joy, William freed him from his bonds, and returned with him to the city. The Christians were very much astonished, and the Saracens would not believe it. After having ransomed more Christians, both returned safely to their country. The marks of what had been done to Armengol were visible as long as he lived, for his neck was crooked, and his face pale.

Armengol evinced a great desire to withdraw from all intercourse with the world, and he, therefore, retired to the convent of Maria de Pratis. The brothers testified to having seen him, when praying, in ecstacy, and suspended in the air, and when asked what kind of a vision he had, he said: "I do not know, God knows."

He often spoke of eternal happiness, and, referring to the time when he was hung in Africa, he said: "Consider, dear brethren, how great the joy of heaven must be, when even suffering for Christ affords us such great happiness! Believe me, all the days of my life I regard as nothing in comparison to the few days after I was hung on the gallows, and thought dead by every one." In speaking of this occurrence he could say no more, but, weeping, repeated the words: "How can I appear before the face of the Lord?"

Armengol was afterwards attacked by a severe illness, and having received the holy Sacraments, he said that he would die on the following day, when all the brothers assembled in order to be present at his death. Just before dying, he sang the following words: "My soul, enter into thy rest, because the Lord has shown grace to thee!" He then made the sign of the cross, and joyfully said: "I shall be pleasing to the Lord in the land of the living," and died. A great crowd assembled to see him; and before he was buried three men and four women, infirm persons, who had touched his body, were cured.

Whatever we read in books or hear in sermons concerning heaven, may be true; although it is as little in comparison to the real heaven as if we were to attempt to paint the sun, moon, and stars upon a small sheet of paper.

BLESSED NICHOLAS RUSKA.

(September 2.)

"Endurance."

Nicholas Ruska was born in Switzerland, and prepared for the priesthood in the seminary of Milan, which St. Charles Barromeo had established. Whenever the holy Archbishop visited the seminary, he made the sign of the cross upon Ruska's forehead, using the words of the Apostle: "My son, fight the good fight, finish thy course, for there is laid up for thee a crown of justice which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to thee in that day." (2 Tim. 4 : 7.) As St. Charles never addressed such words to any other seminarian, it is presumed that these words were spoken in a prophetic spirit. Ruska not only excelled in piety, but he also made rapid progress in his theological studies, and became an excellent Greek and Hebrew scholar. The Bishop of Chur made him Arch-priest. He was conspicuous before priests and laymen by his exemplary life, and he loved children so much that he instructed them in all that would lead them to piety. When seventy years old, he taught them the catechism, and made them presents in order to encourage them to learn. Even when meeting Protestant children, he exhibited his love for them by making the sign of the cross upon their foreheads, and by giving them some trifling presents. When asked why he did so, he said that at least on the heart of the little ones, as upon a tablet, the memory of the Passion and death of Christ could be impressed and preserved, which among the grown-up Protestants had been forgotten through the culpable guilt of their preachers. He showed the greatest compassion towards the poor and afflicted; whenever he had nothing to give, he consoled them. He was the most beautiful type of every Christian virtue, by his dignified demeanor, fearlessness, and perseverance in difficult duties or in adversity by his prudence in his official capacity, and by his chastity of soul and body; he thus preached not only by words, but also by deed. As he was very much hated by Protestant preachers, they endeavored to put him to death. The following circumstances gave them an opportunity to effect their object.

Great dissensions existed in the country of the Grisons for the reason that

the Protestants desired to renew their alliance with Venice, while the Catholics opposed it, and adhered to the old compact with Spain; but as the Catholics were in the minority, they were cruelly persecuted by the Protestants; many were exiled, and some put to death. The preachers incited Captain Buolio, an enemy of the Catholics, to arrest Ruska on the pretence that he was an ally of Spain. That the Catholics might not assist their priest, they entered Ruska's room by night. They pulled the venerable old man out of his bed, gave him hardly time to dress himself, tied his hands together, chained his feet, and after having stolen whatever they could find in the house, dragged him to prison. In their desire to condemn the prisoner to death, the preachers forged letters, imitating his handwriting, and summoned false witnesses, who were willing on oath to accuse him of high treason. Having arrived at Tursis, Ruska was thrown into a damp, dark prison, and instruments of torture were shown to him, with which he was threatened, if he would not confess to having written the spurious letters.

The next day, when Ruska was brought before the judge, and there firmly denied having written the letters, or of having betrayed the country to Spain, the judges became furious, and had this venerable priest, then eighty years old, put to the rack. The executioner took off his coat, and tied his hands on his back, but out of compassion did not draw the rope very tight, when some of the preachers came, and reproached the executioner, unloosened the rope, tied the thumbs of the prisoner with a strong rope, and after drawing another rope through it, slowly drew him up, so that the whole weight of the body hung by the thumbs. In this horrible torment he hung for three hours, during which time he was urged to confess; but as Ruska firmly asserted that the letters were forged, and the witnesses false, the Calvinistic preachers took hold of his feet, and pulled them with all their strength, so that the joints of his body were nearly all dislocated. But what did Ruska do? He offered up his sufferings to God, together with the sufferings of Christ, as a propitiation for the sins which he perhaps might have committed in his life.

The preachers continued to torment him; they pulled the rope to increase his agony; at the same time they mocked at him, telling him that he was now saying Mass, and that it was necessary for him to lift up his hands; the shoulder-blades, pressed out towards the chest, they called the chasuble, using also most indecent language.

They continued this till evening, when his tormentors left for the purpose of enjoying a luxurious repast, during which time Ruska hung on the rope. From time to time one of the preachers left the table, and wantonly practised some inhuman cruelty on the holy man. Finally, towards twilight, some laymen of the court untied the aged sufferer, and gave him some wine and water, but the preachers returned from their sumptuous feast, and forced them to hang the nearly expiring man up again; they assisted them amid the most obscene jokes and laughter, and the drunken monsters tormented him during the whole

night. And what did Ruska? Not a word of anger or impatience escaped his lips; on the contrary he thanked God, because he could suffer something for the honor of His holy name, and he only asked for strength and perseverance. As these wicked men, however, determined, if possible, to force a confession from Blessed Ruska, they commenced their tortures again the next day. They not only drew him up again with the rope, but they also attached heavy weights to his feet, insulted and mocked at him, at the same time striking him, and turning him around on the rope. Ruska prayed incessantly for himself, his parishioners, and the whole Catholic Church. Thus two nights and one day had passed away, when the rope broke, and Ruska fell on the ground with such force that several veins were ruptured, and blood issued from his mouth and nostrils. The executioner became frightened; he hastened to the man of sorrow, laid him upon some straw, wiped off the blood with a cloth, weeping out of compassion. The judges also, who had heard of it, came in a state of intoxication, reproached the executioner, and commanded him at once to fix the rope, and draw him up again; and as Ruska could not stand up, they adjusted the rope, and drew him up amid the most horrible pains; they then went again to their revelry.

The faithful soldier of Christ now felt that his last hour had come. Weeping and sighing, he exclaimed: "O my Lord Jesus, I feel sorry for all the sins I have committed against Thee; I beseech Thee also to forgive my enemies, as I forgive them from my whole heart!" He then invoked the assistance of the Blessed Virgin and all the Saints, saluted the five wounds of Christ, and saying: "Jesus, Mary!" he closed his eyes, and gave up his spirit. His face appeared so life-like that the preachers would not believe that he was dead; one of them kicked him, and the executioner was again ordered to draw him up on the rope; whereupon he was as cruelly beaten as if he had been alive. The body of Blessed Ruska was dragged to the gallows, thrown into a pit, and covered with stones.

SS. SERAPIA AND SABINA.

(September 3.)

"Relationship between Master and Servant."

In Rome there is a beautiful church, built about fourteen hundred years ago in honor of these two Saints. Under the high-altar their bodies rest together in a magnificent shrine, and they are both venerated there, Sabina on the twenty-ninth of August, and Serapia on this day; but as they were united in life

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When the persecution of the Christians had been announced, a holy virgin, named Serapia, from Antioch, lived in the house of Sabina, the widow of Valentine; Sabina, through the exhortations of Serapia, became a Christian, and daily increased in piety and virtue. After some time Governor Berillus sent to her, commanding her to bring before him Serapia; Sabina first resisted, but Serapia said: "My mistress and mother, let me go to him; pray and have confidence in our Lord Jesus Christ, for although a sinner, I firmly believe that He will make me His worthy hand-maid." Sabina replied: "My daughter and my mistress Serapia, I shall either live with you or die; I will not forsake you." Both now presented themselves before the judge, who was told that Sabina, the most respected lady in the city, was at the door with Serapia, the Christian; he rose, met them in the portico, saluted them, and said to Serapia: "Why do humble yourself so much? Remember who you are, and the noble family to which you belong; you should not associate with Christians; return to your house, and leave this wretched person who caused you to renounce the worship of the gods." Sabina said: "I only wish that you could also be induced to give up the unclean gods, and be brought to the knowledge of the true God." The judge out of respect to Sabina's exalted rank, permitted them both to return home.

Three days later, the governor had Serapia brought before him, and said: "Offer up sacrifice to the gods!" Serapia answered: "I fear and honor Almighty God who has made heaven and earth; your gods I shall not worship." "Come then," replied the governor, "and sacrifice to Christ!" Serapia said: "I continually offer up sacrifice to Him by praying to Him day and night." "Where is the temple of Christ?" asked Berillus, "and what sacrifice do you offer up to Him?" Serapia said: "My sacrifice consists in leading a chaste and innocent life, and that through His mercy I may incite others to embrace this holy faith; for there is nothing greater than to know and serve the true God." "Are you, therefore, yourself the temple of your God?" asked Berillus. "If with God's assistance I remain pure, then am I His temple, for the holy Scriptures say: 'You are the temple of God, and the spirit of God dwelleth within you.' (1 Cor. 3 : 16.)" The governor then said: "If, however, violence is used against you, you will cease to be the temple of God?" Serapia answered: "The holy Scriptures say: 'If any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy.' (1 Cor. 3 : 17.)" The governor who had no regard for virtue, commanded her to be delivered up to two young Egyptians who were ordered to violate her. Serapia fell upon her knees, and exclaimed: "My Lord Jesus, the defender and protector of virgins, I call upon Thee; assist me, and deliver me from the diabolical designs of these men. Blind them, so that they cannot touch me; confound their shamelessness, and preserve my innocence!"

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When night had come, a terrible noise was heard, and the earth commenced to quake. The two monsters were frightened, fell down on the ground as if dead, and the pure virgin seeing that Almighty God had come to her help, prayed the whole night with outstretched arms. Before daylight, messengers, sent by the governor, entered the room, and found her praying, but the Egyptians lying as if dead on the floor, unable to move or speak. The governor had the two Egyptians brought in, and commanded Serapia to invoke Christ, and restore them, which she also did, and they rose, stood upon their feet, and were able to speak. The governor, turning to her, said: "Tell me, Serapia, by what power you effected all this, and you shall be free." Serapia replied: "I am not a witch, and all who love Christ, have nothing to do with magic." The governor said: "I will see if your witchcraft will help you; if you do not worship the gods, you shall be beheaded." Serapia answered: "Do your will; I shall not sacrifice to Satan, because I am a Christian." The judge now gave orders that she should be burned alive, but as soon as the servants applied the burning torches to the body of the saintly virgin, they were extinguished. The judge, filled with anger, commanded that she should be beheaded with the sword, which order was carried into effect.

The noble woman Sabina buried the body in the vault which she had built for herself; she gave rich alms, and remained firm in the Christian faith in which St. Serapia had instructed her; she daily visited the sick, and gave them all they needed. When afterwards Helpidius, the president of the high court, arrived, the judge who had sentenced Serapia to death informed him of the conduct of Sabina, who was at once summoned to appear before him. The president said: "Are you Sabina, the wife of the noble Valentine?" Sabina answered: "Yes." Upon which the president said: "Why did you forget your rank, and associate with Christians, whose life is death, and who refuse to worship the gods?" Sabina answered: "I thank our Lord Jesus Christ, who, through His holy servant Serapia delivered me from the power of Satan, so that I do not walk in idolatry as you do." The president replied: "According to your opinion, we and our emperors worship devils, and no gods?" "You should worship God," answered Sabina, "who has created every thing, and who governs the whole world, and not the lifeless idols with whom you and your emperors will one day perish forever." The president then said: "I conjure you by all the gods to sacrifice; if you refuse, I shall not defer the sentence of death, but will command you to be beheaded." "Foolish man," replied Sabina, "I never shall sacrifice to Satan, your Lord, because I am a Christian, and Christ is my God whom I venerate and honor." Thereupon the governor pronounced the sentence, saying: "I decree that Sabina, on account of her disobedience to our gods, and for blaspheming the emperor, be beheaded, and her estates confiscated."

After Sabina, the venerable servant of Christ, was beheaded, the Christians

buried her in the same grave where she had a short time before deposited her mistress in the faith, St. Serapia, the virgin of Christ.

ST. NOTBURGA.

(September 4.)

"The Christian Servant."

In the lower valley of the river Inn, Tyrol, lies the village of Rotenburg, and not far from it on a hill is an old castle, bearing the same name. St. Notburga was born in the village, and died in the castle. Her father was a hatter, and sent his daughter, when eighteen years old, to be a servant in the castle, where she attended to the kitchen, and where she enjoyed the special happiness of distributing whatever was left from the meals among the poor; she profitted by this opportunity to give together with food for the body, nourishment for the soul also. There is a singular power and blessing in the admonition of a good pious servant, and many have become by their exhortation really good shepherds, as we have seen in the life of St. Serapia.

The son of the lord of Rotenburg had a wife, named Ottilia, who was of a very avaricious disposition, and who felt angry, because the poor received that which was left from the table. As long as her mother-in-law lived, she dared not to interfere; but when the aged lady died at the end of six years, Ottilia presided herself over the affairs of the castle, and forbade Notburga to give anything to the poor; for she declared that what was left should be given rather to the pigs.

There are some servants who, out of a mistaken spirit of charity, give to beggars many things from the kitchen without their master's permission; but this is not right. An act of mercy by which justice is violated is displeasing to God, for it would then be right to steal from the rich in order to give to the poor. What did Notburga? She would not be dishonest, but at the same time would not let the poor want; she, therefore, deprived herself of a part of her meals, and in such a manner did she give to the poor. Such alms are worth a great deal, because it is a greater charity to deprive ourselves of something than to give that which we do not need. For this reason one shilling given by a servant, is of greater value before God than a dollar given by a rich man, for the servant is obliged to work hard for the shilling, and, no doubt, has use for it herself.

This noble conduct of Notburga confounded and vexed the narrow-minded mistress, who, when her husband had one day returned from the imperial court,

told him that Notburga, by her extravagant liberality, attracted beggars, and other kind of rabble, which fact might become very dangerous in his absence from the castle.

The lord of the castle wished to investigate the case, and he ordered Notburga, who was just carrying food to the poor, to show him what she had. Notburga told the simple truth, that as her mistress had forbidden her to give anything to the poor, she was about to give them her own meal. In saying this, she showed him the meat and the bread she carried in her apron, but the lord, as he thought, saw nothing but shavings. He returned to the castle, and related to his wife what had happened. But it only increased her anger, and when Notburga returned, Ottilia at once dismissed her opprobriously from her service.

Notburga entered the service of a farmer, and made a contract with him that sufficient time for her devotions should be given her, and that on the vigil of a feast-day she should not be obliged to work after the night prayers were said, for which privilege she was satisfied with moderate wages. There are, on the contrary, many servants who are wicked enough to sell their religion for a few shillings, that is, are willing to live in places where they can seldom go to Mass on Sundays, but yet perhaps receive high wages. Esau sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage, and such a servant for a few shillings sells her right to heaven.

St. Notburga is generally represented as a servant working in the field, and near her a sickle suspended in the air. It is said that one Saturday evening in harvest time, when the Angelus had rung, Notburga wished to go to the chapel of St. Rupert to perform her usual devotions; but the farmer ordered her to remain at her work. But Notburga replied: "My sickle shall be the judge of my right." And in saying these words, she hung up her sickle in the air as if on a nail, so that it remained suspended before the eyes of the farmer and the other servants. Thereupon Notburga again took the sickle in her hand, and went to the chapel.

It is very wrong to consider only the work servants have to perform, and refuse them time to fulfill their religious duties, since pious servants always labor conscientiously for the advantage of their masters, and frequently bring the blessing of heaven into the house. The burgrave Henry, after Notburga was dismissed from his services, experienced nothing but misfortune; his wife Ottilia died, and he quarreled with his own brother Sigisfried. In his distress he remembered how differently affairs had been conducted when Notburga was in the castle; he, therefore, having married again, asked her to return, and take care of his house, at the same time giving her permission to distribute among the poor whatever was left.

It is an honor for a servant to be asked to return to her former place, and a good servant is of more advantage, and of greater necessity to the master than

the master is to the servant. This fact is known to servants, who sometimes on that account demand higher wages; but how did Notburga use her great influence with her master? Not to her own advantage, but to the honor of God, and the interest of her master. She exhorted him to reconcile himself with his brother, which he also did. Notburga remained with her master until her death, which happened eighteen years after she entered the castle the second time. Henry received temporal and spiritual advantages by keeping this holy servant; he and his children became charitable towards the poor owing to the example of his Christian servant.

Notburga died at the age of forty-seven; her grave in the chapel of St. Rupert, where she was accustomed to pray, was afterwards glorified by a large and splendid church, and has become a place of pilgrimage, because after her death (1313) many miracles were performed there through her intercession.

ST. CENSURINUS.

(September 5.)

"Triumph of Christianity."

THE time of the martyrs was a three hundred years' war of a wonderful kind. On the one side the pagans rose with all their power, hatred, and cruelty; on the other side were the Christians with no other weapons but truth, grace, love, and patience. A remarkable monument of that great combat is still in existence at Rome, the Colosseum, in which Christians were thrown before wild beasts, or put to death in some other manner, while the blood-thirsty pagans were the joyful spectators. But how is it now? Who has triumphed? There is no pagan emperor at Rome, but the Pope, the visible head of the Catholic Church, resides there, and in the middle of the Colosseum stands a large crucifix, and around the inner walls are placed the stations. Christianity has triumphed, thanks be to God!

When Decius, the most cruel of the emperors, died after a reign of two years, Gallus succeeded him. In the beginning all went on well; but he banished his own happiness and peace by persecuting those holy men who always had prayed to God for the peace of the empire. Gallus was so enraged against the Christians that he determined to obliterate from the face of the earth the very name of Christian. There were consequently many martyrs made in Rome, and the same punishment awaited those who concealed Christians in their houses, but also the same reward. (Matt. 10 : 41.)

Censurinus, an officer of high rank, and secretly a Christian, attended to the affairs of the emperor, but he also served the Lord; he endeavored to assist the Saints who were in prison, and encouraged many to remain firm in their faith. The emperor at last heard of it, and when Censurinus was asked as to whether such was really the case, he, without hesitation, replied that he was a Christian, despised the gods, and worshiped only God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The emperor said: "When you say that you worship but one God, why do you speak of three?" The Saint replied: "The Christian faith confesses that in one substance there are three persons, and that in every person exists the same substance." "Why then," said the emperor, "do you declare that Christ, whom you confess to be your God, was born, suffered, died, and was buried, if your God has no beginning or end?" To this Censurinus replied: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man at the same time; begotten from the Father before all time, but not less than the Father, and born in the fulness of time of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He assumed our nature in order to suffer and die for our salvation. His death, however, was not suffered by the divine substance of Christ, but by the nature of His assumed humanity. He was buried according to his humanity, rose on the third day, and ascended into heaven before the eyes of His disciples, and sitteth now at the right hand of God the Father, from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead and the world by fire." "Do not waste so much time in idle talk," said the emperor, "but sacrifice to the gods." "You show that you belong to those who turn away from hearing the word of God," replied Censurinus, "and call it even idle talk. The very words which you reject, will judge you at the last judgment; neither your favor nor that of any one else shall ever induce me to leave Christ or to worship the gods." The emperor commanded him to be taken to the city of Ostia in heavy chains. Maximus, a priest, the Deacon Archelaus, and Aurea, a servant of God, obtained permission to converse with the Saint in prison, when suddenly his chains were loosened through the power of God. There were seventeen soldiers present, and Maximus, convinced that they had received the grace of God, commenced to instruct them in the doctrine of Christ, and, after three days, baptized them. Afterwards the blessed Bishop Cyriacus confirmed them, and administered to them the mysteries of the body and blood of our Saviour. Meanwhile a youth, ten years old, was resuscitated in the presence of the assembled Christians through the prayers of the holy Bishop Cyriacus. The emperor also heard of it, and sent one of the highest officers, named Ulpicius Romulus, to Ostia, to induce the Christians to apostatise, but at the same time commanded those who would not obey to be put to death. Ulpicius arrested and brought before the judge the holy Bishop Cyriacus, the blessed priest Maximus, the Deacon Archelaus, Aurea, the servant of God, Censurinus, and the converted soldiers. The judge asked them if they were Christians, and all answered: "Yes." Whereupon the judge said: "Our master, the

emperor, has decreed that you should renounce your religion, and worship the gods." But they replied: "If the emperor does not order us to perform any thing in opposition to God, we are obliged to obey him, but otherwise we are commanded and determined to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5 : 29.) The judge ordered them to be scourged, and the soldiers of Christ rejoiced, because they were found worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. They were finally carried to the amphitheatre, and, directing the eyes of their spirit to God, willingly presented their holy necks to the sword. They were beheaded on the fifth day of September.

ST. ELEUTHERIUS.

(September 6.)

"The Dangers of Pride."

St. Gregory, the celebrated Pope, whose feast is celebrated on the twelfth of March, has written the life of St. Eleutherius. He says: "Eleutherius, the father of the convent of St. Mark, lying outside the walls of Spoleto, lived with me for a long time in my convent, and he died there. His disciples relate that through his prayers he had resuscitated a dead person. He was a man of simplicity and contrition, and there is no doubt but that the tears which came from such an humble man obtained great favors from God. I will now relate a miracle performed by him as related to me by himself when asked to do so. Once when on a journey, to find shelter for the night, he went to a convent of virgins, where a boy whom they kept to do errands was tormented every night by an evil spirit. The poor sisters asked him if the boy could not stay with him that night. Eleutherius willingly consented, but the next day the sisters asked the Saint if nothing had happened to the boy during the night. Astonished at such a question, he answered: 'No." The sisters then told him the condition of the youth, and besought him to take the boy back with him. The Saint consented, and as the child remained free from the torments of the devil, the heart of the Saint was filled with perhaps an almost justifiable degree of pride at the recovery of the boy; for he one day said to the brethren: 'The devil only deceived the sisters; since the boy has been among the servants of God, he dares not attack the boy.' These words were hardly spoken, when in the same moment before all the brothers of the convent the boy was seized and tormented by the devil, whereupon the holy man burst into tears and lamentation, and when the brethren endeavored to console him, he said: 'Believe me, that not one of us shall touch a

piece of bread to-day if the boy is not delivered from Satan.' The brethren then all prayed with him, and continued to do so until the boy was cured."

It has happened more than a thousand times that when any one has received a special grace from God, on which he has prided himself or of which he has spoken unnecessarily, he has generally lost it again. Even men of the world know this, in as far as they pride themselves upon the temporal goods they possess. As soon as the spirit of self-sufficiency and vanity is awakened within us after having received the grace of God, that grace will be a poison for our soul; it becomes food for sin, for which reason Almighty God deprives us of it. Be careful, therefore, how you speak of the graces you receive from God, and if you are obliged to mention them, do it with the intention that no honor will be given to *you*, but to *God* alone. The vanity of St. Eleutherius, however, was promptly atoned for by penance, humiliation, and fervent prayer. There are others who do not lead a holy life, and are not assisted by the prayers of pious brethren, as was St. Eleutherius, and cannot, therefore, regain the grace of God which they have lost.

St. Gregory relates further: "How great was the power of prayer possessed by this man of God, I have experienced myself. At certain times I suffered from great weakness and disease of the lungs. Easter was at hand, and I grieved more, because I could not fast on Holy Saturday than I did at my illness; my saddened heart, however, found relief, because I secretly brought the man of God into my chapel, and asked him to pray to Almighty God to give me strength on that day to fast, which was also done; for as soon as we had entered the chapel, he commenced to pray and weep, and then left, whereupon I forgot not only my want of food, but even my illness. Towards evening I was so strong that I would have been able to fast until the next day if I wished. In such a manner I experienced in myself that whatever had been told me of St. Eleutherius, was true."

We know nothing more about this Saint except what has been related by St. Gregory.

BLESSED FRANCIS GALUZZI.

(September 7.)

."Father Confessor"

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHT years ago it happened in Rome that at a funeral of a priest an immense crowd assembled. After the prayers for the dead were recited, and the Father General of the Jesuits had kissed the hands of the deceased, the multitude, like a powerful stream, overcame all obstacles, and rushed upon the corpse to kiss it or to procure some relic belonging to it. Who was the man for whom the people were so filled with enthusiasm? It was a poor Jesuit father, named Galuzzi, who was the most beautiful model of a true priest. His duty consisted in preaching daily at a certain religious institution; he spoke in such a manner that he was not repulsive, but attractive to sinners; he wounded them not, but healed the wounds of their souls. Father Galuzzi was of a melancholy temperament, and was frequently tempted by bad humor, which temptation, however, he conquered, so that he was beloved by the young on account of his affability, and was especially sought by them in the confessional. He was very careful to lead his penitent to the right path of heaven; if his admonitions and the penances he imposed upon them were without avail, he not only prayed and offered up the holy sacrifice of the Mass for the stubborn sinner, but he imposed also upon himself severe penances that God might move the sinner; he also asked others to pray for such sinners. It was the greatest recommendation for a young man if he had Father Galuzzi for his confessor.

As it was well known how richly blessed were the exhortations of Father Galuzzi, it was considered a special blessing if any one who was dying could receive his assistance; even princes and Cardinals sent for him when their last hour drew near.

A rich and noble youth who had led a very wicked life, and uttered the most horrible blasphemies, fell dangerously ill; if any one urged him to go to confession, he became so furious that he even threatened once to cut his throat, or to throw himself out of the window. A priest then entreated Father Galuzzi to do something for the unhappy man. Father Galuzzi at first was not admitted, and the second time he was only permitted to make a visit of courtesy. The rich youth received him very coldly, and soon turned his back to him, and when the priest spoke to him of the necessity of making a confession, the youth screamed like one crazy, and told him to leave his room. Father Galuzzi remembered that he had some relics of St. Francis Xavier with him, and was, therefore, in hopes that this great Saint would obtain for the sick youth, sincere contrition. He begged of him permission to place the relics upon him, and to invoke St. Xavier in his behalf, and to the astonishment of all, the young man

consented. and when after the prayers Father Galuzzi asked him if he now wished to make his confession, he said: "Yes, at once." He confessed his sins with sincere sorrow, and, overwhelmed with grief, he wept bitterly, saying that he was now as anxious to die as he was before to live.

The fulness of grace which Galuzzi possessed, was not confined alone to such cases, but also to others not less desperate. He was sometimes invited to attend those criminals who were condemned to death, and who refused to be reconciled with God.

Once he visited a prisoner who, like a mad man, would not listen either to kind words or threats. Father Galuzzi then addressed himself to God in tears, and prayed like Moses: "O Lord, forgive this unhappy man, or else strike me out of the book that thou hast written." (Exod. 32 : 31, 32.) Having prayed for some time, he rose, and approaching the criminal he embraced him when at once the stony heart was touched; he confessed his sins with great sorrow, and was willing to submit to death as a just punishment for his sins.

The holy priest labored especially to free others from impurity or to guard them against it. Among the resolutions he had written was the one: "In honor of the Saviour, who was scourged, I will persecute the sin of the flesh." His zeal for the honor of God, and the salvation of souls was also great out of the confessional; he would often say: "My only desire is that my God and Lord may be loved!" As soon as he heard of a hardened sinner, he sought all possible means to assist him; he would speak kindly to him, make him a little present, embrace him, and if all this was of no avail, would fall on his knees before him, conjuring him not to offend God any longer, and spoke so impressively to him that the sinner would weep bitterly over his sins.

Even the approach of death could not prevent him from spending his last strength in the confessional, and preparing a dying man for death. His confessional was the spiritual pond of Bethsaida, (John 5 : 2–4) and he himself the Angel who descended into the pond. The most hardened sinners who had the least desire to be cured were converted if they only approached him. The people were also convinced of this fact, so much so, that before the holy priest had died they cut pieces from his confessional as a remembrance or a relic.

The Sacrament of Penance is a means of salvation, yet many do not find salvation there, because they have not the assistance of a prudent and pious confessor to lead them to true sorrow, penance, and amendment, and although there may exist a sufficient sorrow to obtain absolution, such a soul is like a new-born babe, who, although alive, would soon die if it did not receive the necessary care. If, therefore, dear reader, you sincerely desire to be converted, seek the most prudent and pious priest whom you can find, and consult with him concerning your eternal salvation, and if you have found one, thank God from your whole heart, for He has given you a great treasure. Be odedient and faithful to all the counsels and directions which your confessor gives you.

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

(September 8.)

(From Bayerle.)

As the Mother of the Lord, who is full of grace, was in her conception from the first moment of her existence, pure, holy, and free from every stain of sin, her birth must have been holy, so that she came not into the world like the rest of mankind under the displeasure of God, but whereas she was free from original sin, she came as a child of divine grace. Our holy Church, therfore, celebrates the birthday of the most Blessed Virgin, like that of her immaculate conception, with an Octave.

St. Augustine, the great teacher of the Church, whilst inviting in his sermon of this day heaven and earth to share in the solemn festivity, most beautifully pronounces its significance for all men, saying: "Beloved, the longed for birthday of the blessed and always glorious Virgin Mary has come; let the earth greatly rejoice that it has been glorified by the birth of such a sublime virgin. She is the flower of the field from which grew up the precious *lily of the vallies*, (Canticle of Canticles 2 : 1) through her birth the nature of our first parents was changed, and the hereditary evil atoned for. With her is revoked the ill-boding sentence of Eve: '*In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children;*' (Genesis 3 : 16) for she brought forth the Lord in heavenly ecstacy. Eve concealed in her bosom her future pain, but Mary the joy of the whole world, because the former gave birth to sin, the latter to innocence. Our first mother brought into the world punishment, but the Mother of the Lord presented us with the salvation of the world. Eve is the author of sin, Mary the author of all merit. Eve brought death and evil, Mary salvation and life everlasting. The former injured, the latter healed; obedience comes to expiate disobedience, and faithfulness to atone for faithlessness. Therefore, Mary may be jubilant, and pour out her soul in a hymn of praise, she being the Mother of the Saviour! All the choirs of the blessed exultingly join the song in which she pours forth her rapturous joy, thus: '*My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done great things to me.*' (Luke 1 : 46–49.) Thus the miracle of a new birth avoided the cause of a guilt prevailing, aud always increasing, and Mary's song of praise drowned the lamentation of Eve."

According to a Christian tradition the parents of the most Blessed Virgin Mary were Joachim, (called Heli in the S. W.) and Anna, who lived in the Jewish town of Nazareth. Joachim was descended from the royal family of

David, and Anna was the youngest daughter of the Priest Mathan of Betlehem, of the tribe of Aaron, who had two other daughters, Mary and Sobe, the latter of whom was the mother of Elizabeth, who gave birth to St. John the Baptist. Thus Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was of royal and priestly birth, as also her divine son was to be king and priest, and, indeed, both in their highest signification.

Though Joachim and Anna were of such exalted birth, they lived in very humble circumstances; for that branch of the royal house of David was then greatly impoverished. This, however, was necessary according to the decree of eternal providence; for as the Saviour Himself would come into the world in poverty and humility, in order to become equal even to the lowest of His brothers on earth, thus also His Mother was not to be rich and esteemed, but poor and lowly in the eyes of the world. Though poor and lowly, and on that account not worthy of honor in the eyes of the world, the holy parents of the most Blessed Virgin were rich in virtues and merits, and for that reason great and estimable in the eyes of God. The holy fathers of the Church call them worthy of every praise, walking spotless before God, keeping all the commandments and laws of the Lord, and hoping and longing for the coming of the promised Saviour, who especially at that time was the hope of all the pious in Israel, and thereby alone could they make themselves worthy of being chosen to become the parents of the Blessed Virgin, who was more full of grace than any other created being. St. John of Damascus worthily exclaims: "O happy parents! What a sublime idea of your virtues is given to us by the daughter who came forth from you! The holiness of your lives must necessarily correspond with the holiness of her who was to be the Mother of the Saint of all Saints. For you deserved it by your pure and holy life to bring forth the treasure of virginity."

But the heart of this pious couple was sad; for though they had been married for many years they were still childless, at that time even a disgrace among the Israelites, as, on the contrary, many children were looked upon as a special blessing. They finally reached the age when, according to human judgment, they could no longer expect to see their wish fulfilled. Yet just this time was to come in order that the Lord, according to His eternal decree, might do with them in a miraculous manner what He had formerly done with Abraham and Sarah, the ancestors of His chosen people; what He had done with the parents of Samuel, the greatest and last of the judges of Israel, and what He later would do with the parents of the forerunner of Jesus Christ. The Virgin chosen to bring forth the salvation of the world was not to be born according to the common laws of nature, but by the special grace of God.

According to tradition, the birth of their blessed daughter was announced to Joachim and his wife Anna by an Angel, who also informed them that her name should be "Mary."

Mary, like her divine Son Jesus Christ, was born poor, and little regarded

by the world, yet the Feast of her birth is nevertheless, after that of her divine Son, the most glorious that ever was celebrated, and that still is celebrated with enthusiasm by all faithful hearts in heaven and on earth as one of the most joyful festivals of the whole ecclesiastical year.

Introit of the holy Mass, *Epistle*, and *Gospel* are the same as on the *Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the most Blessed Virgin Mary.*

PRAYER.

We pray Thee, O Lord, grant to Thy servants the gift of Thy heavenly grace, that, as the conception of the most Blessed Virgin was for us the beginning of salvation, the wished for Feast of her Birth may bring us greater peace. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

ON Sunday in the Octave of the *Feast of the Nativity of the most Blessed Virgin Mary* is celebrated in our holy Church

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

There is after the most glorious name of Jesus, our divine Saviour, no name in heaven or on earth so highly honored by the whole Catholic Church as that of "Mary," the most Blessed Mother of the Lord. Already in the first centuries of the Church pious Christians used always to pronounce and implore the name of the most Blessed Virgin with that of her divine Son, and the *Feast of the Holy Name of Mary* had already been celebrated in some churches, when at last on account of a glorious victory gained by the assistance of the most Blessed Virgin in the year 1683 over the Turks, near the city of Vienna, Pope Innocent XI. instituted this feast for the whole Christian world.

St. Jerome says: "*Mary* means *My Light*," and St. Gregory Thaumaturgus declares that *Mary* signifies *Enlightening*. According to others *Mary* is derived from a Hebrew word, meaning *Bitterness of the Sea*, and the name of *Mary* (properly *Mirjam*) was given to the sister of Moses, because she was born at the time when King Pharao began to have the new-born Hebrew male children put to death by drowning. Later, when the Israelites had passed through the Red Sea on dry ground, and the Egyptians had been destroyed therein, the name of the sister of Moses was changed from *Mirjam* into *Mary*, meaning as much as *Mistress of the Sea*. St. Ambrose says in this regard: "This Mary is a prototype

of the holy Virgin Mary; for she is the mistress of the sea of this world, and leads us safely through this sea into the land of promise." Not less significantly do the holy fathers give to the name of *Mary* the signification of *Star of the Sea*, on account of which St. Bernard most beautifully says: "The name of *Mary* means *Star of the Sea*, and is most justly and properly given to the Virgin Mother. For as a star spreads its beams without lessening its own light, thus also the Virgin brought forth her Son without injuring her purity; and as the spreading of its rays does not in the least lessen the brightness of the star, thus also the birth of her Son injures not in the least the purity of the Virgin. She is the noble star that hath come forth from the house of Jacob, whose rays enlighten the whole universe, whose brightness shines on the heights and in the depths, who passes through the earth, and warms the hearts more than the bodies, who cherishes virtue, and destoys vice. She is the glorious and sublime star, whose glory shines over the great and wide sea, beaming with merit, and glowing with the light of example. Art thou tossed about by storms and tempests upon the sea of this world, turn not thine eyes from Mary, the brilliant star, if thou wilt be saved. If the storm of temptation rages, if thou art dashed against the rocks of sorrow, look up to that star, call upon Mary! If the waves of pride, ambition, slander, and jealousy seek to overwhelm thee, look up to that star, implore Mary! If thy heart, like a frail bark, is shaken by anger, avarice, or sensual allurements, look up to Mary! If thou art terrified by the greatness of thy misdeeds, depressed by the stings of a bad conscience, overpowered by the terrors of the judgment, if thou already beginnest to be crushed by the weight of sorrow, and are near falling into the abyss of despair, think of Mary! In danger, in anxiety, in doubt and despair, think of Mary, call upon Mary! Never let her name leave thy mouth, never thy heart; and that thou mayest obtain the assistance of her intercession, imitate the example of her life! Follow her, and thou wilt not lose the way, invoke her, and thou wilt not err; if she holds thee, thou wilt not fall; if she protects thee, thou wilt be without fear; if she supports thee, thou wilt not feel fatigue; if she favors thee, thou wilt attain thine aim, and thou wilt experience how justly it is said: '*The name of the virgin was Mary.*'" (Luke 1 : 27.)

Introit of the holy Mass and *Gospel* are the same as on the *Annunciation* (March 25), and *Epistle* the same as on the *Feast of the Holy Virgin Mary of the Mount Carmel* (July 16.)

PRAYER.

We pray Thee, Almighty God, grant that Thy faithful, who rejoice in the feast of the name, and in the protection of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, may be freed by her pious intercession from all evils on earth, and hereafter obtain the joys everlasting in heaven. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

ST. SEVERIANUS.

(September 9.)

"Christian Dignity."

AFTER the death of the forty martyrs, who suffered under Licinius at Sebaste, in Armenia, Satan, the father of evil, rose again, and incited his followers to hatred and murder against the Christians. At that time St. Severianus was shining by his piety and love to God. Every one admired his courage, and many persuaded him to flee, as he was in danger on account of his freely expressed opinions, but the Saint answered: "I will not conceal what I think concerning the pagan gods, and I shall not give any cause to the wicked to glory over me; but I shall prove to them their error, for a soldier of Christ is stronger than a wicked emperor." After having said this publicly in the city of Sebaste, he told some of his countrymen who were present to collect his bones after he had suffered martyrdom. Lysias, the judge, then received the following information: "Severianus, one of your soldiers of high rank, despises the decrees of the emperor and your power; he calls himself a Christian, and he was the cause of the death of the forty brave soldiers, by persuading them not to obey the commands of the emperor." Hearing this, the judge sent soldiers to bring Severianus before him; the Saint, however, when he heard of it, gave himself up. He entered the court-room, and said to Lysias: "Here is he whom you seek; I am come in order to show you what the martyrs before this have amply proved to you, which is that you cannot with all your cruelties make a soldier of Christ deny his faith." The judge considered this bold speech as a gross insult, and commanded Severianus to be stripped, laid on the ground, and beaten. The Saint, however, prayed while he was scourged: "The wicked have wrought upon my back, they have lengthened my iniquity." (Ps. 128: 5.) When the soldiers were tired, the judge commanded them to raise him up, and said: "You have seen, Severianus, how you have profitted by your courage and confidence in Christ." The Saint replied: "If you had eyes to see, I would show you what that courage is that has been given me; but you are blind, and cannot see the heavenly gifts which will be my portion." "You only boast, and try to seduce others," said Lysias, "who, like you, are foolish; but you can never deceive me; I will punish you until you acknowledge the gods." The Saint replied: "Do whatever you wish; bring in all the instruments of martyrdom, and you shall know the power of my Lord; you will be weary of devising torments before I will be weary of suffering them." "Wretch, do you not know that you are addressing your superior?" angrily said Lysias. "The religion of Christ has made me bold," replied Severianus, "for I serve a God who teaches me to despise even wicked kings, and not to heed superiors who do not live according to

the law. You tell me that I am a soldier; but look also at my nobility in Christ who has regenerated me in His blood, and made me more noble than kings, and more powerful than superiors." Was Severianus guilty of sin by saying that he was more noble than kings, and more powerful than superiors? No, for he only spoke the truth. The Christian becomes in baptism a child of the heavenly Father, therefore a son or daughter of God; he also becomes partaker of all that God Himself possesses, of His glory in heaven; he becomes as one redeemed by Christ, the life and death of the Saviour is the price of his redemption; in the Blessed Eucharist He unites Himself with him, and the true Christian becomes a temple of the Holy Ghost. For this reason the Christian respects himself, and will never be guilty of falsehood, fraud, gluttony, or impurity.

The military judge, filled with anger, had the martyr hung up to a post, and his flesh torn with iron hooks, and while the soldiers like wild beasts opened his sides, the Saint said: "My Lord Jesus Christ, who didst protect the Apostles, and preserve the bodies of the three children, strengthen me, and give honor to Thy name, and destroy the power of those who persecute Thy sacred flock, that the whole earth may know that Thou art the Lord."

After this prayer, the judge commanded him to be taken from the post, and thrown into prison. A great crowd followed him. Taking leave of them, he entered his cell full of joy, and praising God. After five days the judge had him again brought before him, and said: "Sacrifice to the gods, cease your boasting that I may not be compelled to inflict greater torments upon you." St. Severianus replied: "Foolish and wretched man, you cannot induce me to sacrifice to the gods; even if you should inflict greater punishment upon me, I shall never deny my Lord Jesus Christ." The judge then commanded his mouth to be beaten in with stones, and said: "Do not mention the name of the crucified, for you will pollute the court-room by doing so." The Saint, however, answered: "Wicked man, when speaking of your gods you imagine that you do not pollute the room, and yet you dare to say such things of Christ our King? You are angry, not because your room is polluted, but because in hearing this terrible name you suffer torments in your soul." Whereupon the judge said: "Hang him up again on the post, and tear his sides open, for I see that he still remains in his error." They then tied heavy stones around the neck and feet of Severianus, put a rope around his body, and raised him up, so that by the weight of the stones his flesh was torn into pieces, and the judge mockingly said: "Fight bravely, Severianus, that you may receive a greater reward!" The Saint, however, sighing, turned his soul towards heaven, and said: "Hear me, O Lord God, and give me eternal life, so that the enemy may not glory in my confusion." He then looked upon Lysias, and said: "If you, unhappy man, only knew that by suffering these torments I will avoid eternal punishment, you would rather suffer yourself the torments which you inflict upon me." The judge, hearing the Saint speaking thus, was astonished, and said: "I have always

heard that you was ignorant, but I see that you possess the eloquence of an orator." The Saint replied: "Do not think that *I* speak, for I am ignorant; it is *the grace of God* which speaks in me." He then prayed to the Lord thus: "I thank Thee, O Lord, because Thou hast delivered me from the snares of my enemies, and hast freed my soul from those who endeavored to destroy it; for to me to live is Christ, and to die, gain.'" (1 Philip. 1 : 21.) After this prayer he died; the next day pious men assembled, and buried his venerable body.

In such a manner was St. Severianus crowned a martyr on the ninth day of September, under the reign of Licinius, and under the dominion of Jesus Christ.

ST. PULCHERIA.

(September 10.)

"Human Respect."

PULCHERIA was the daughter of the Emperor Arcadius, and the sister of Theodosius the younger. From her earliest youth she was, like her brothers and sisters, inclined to piety, but she was especially remarkable for her strength of mind and determination of character. Pulcheria was not sixteen years old, when she was chosen regent of the empire, and guardian of her brother who was two years younger than herself. She made the vow of perpetual chastity, and induced her three sisters to do the same. In order to remain firm in her resolution, she presented to the cathedral of Constantinople a tablet adorned with gold and precious stones upon which her vow was inscribed. All the cares of the empire did not prevent the noble virgin from spending much of her time in prayer. She frequently visited the churches, was liberal to the poor, hospitable to strangers, never went out unless accompanied by her sisters, and although born in a palace, she detested idleness, and occupied her leisure hours in work. She was very zealous, crucified her flesh by voluntary hardships, erected churches, hospitals, and convents, and endowed them liberally. Every one who wished to speak to her on matters of business was admitted to her presence, and she subjected her will to Him by whose grace and assistance she governed, but, above all, did she endeavor to defend the Catholic faith against the many heresies by which the people of that time were deluded.

When her brother had attained the proper age, Pulcheria gave over the reins of government into his hands, but she continued to use her influence for the advancement of religion, especially as an event took place just then which

was of vital importance to the Church. It is an article of Catholic faith that the Son of God in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary united human nature with the divine nature, so that God and man form in Him but one single person, the God-man Jesus Christ, therefore He who was born of Mary is not only man, but also God, and, therefore, the Blessed Virgin can be justly called the Mother of God. In the time of St. Pulcheria, Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, opposed this doctrine, and openly denied that Mary was the Mother of God. He thereby caused great disturbance, and acted with unseemly violence against those who maintained the doctrine of the Catholic Church. The heretical opinion of Nestorius caused bitter feelings and even schisms to arise in the Church, and it was condemned at the general council of Ephesus. The Holy Ghost dwelling in the heart of Pulcheria soon made manifest to her the unsoundness of the new doctrine. Pulcheria, therefore, ranked herself among the opponents of Nestorius; she took pains to enlighten the mind of the emperor, who was rather inclined to favor the innovation, and to her efforts must be ascribed the fact that the orthodox Bishops assembled at Ephesus to give testimony to the truth of the Catholic belief. Baronius, speaking of this, says: "It was a wonderful decree of God that by a virgin, a spouse of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God should be defended and glorified against the blasphemies of Nestorius." It was also by divine providence that this discussion took place at Ephesus, where the largest church was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and where she herself lived when St. John was Bishop of Ephesus. As, however, no Saint has ever lived without in some way suffering persecution, so also was it with Pulcheria, for the adherents of Nestorius invented a calumny against her which was as false as it was malicious. At the same time Chrysaphius, a courtier of the most exalted rank, embraced the new heresy, and resolved to have Eutyches, who was also an adherent of Nestorius, appointed Bishop in place of Flavian, an orthodox Bishop, whom he determined to remove, and as he knew that it would be useless to seek the influence of Pulcheria, he sought to gain the confidence of Eudoxia, the wife of the emperor, who at length persuaded her husband to banish from his court one who had been his greatest benefactress and friend. Pulcheria took up her abode in a house near Constantinople, and Eudoxia gained such an ascendency over the mind of her husband that Chrysaphius found it easy to carry out his designs against the holy Bishop Flavian. At the expiration of two years, however, the emperor discovered that he had been greatly deceived by Chrysaphius and his friends, and he bitterly reproached Eudoxia for having persuaded him to banish his sister from the court. He at once disgraced Chrysaphius, and recalled his faithful adviser, Pulcheria. Her first act on her return was to have the body of the saintly Flavian, who had died in exile, brought to Constantinople, and honorably interred in the church of the Holy Apostles. The Emperor Theodosius died when not quite fifty years old, and as he left no heirs, his sister Pulcheria succeeded

him. The affairs of the empire, however, were in such a complicated state that Pulcheria found it necessary to associate a man with her, in the administration of the government, and she, therefore, invited Marcian, a man of advanced age, a good Catholic, and a virtuous and able officer, to become her assistant, on the express condition that he should be only her husband in name. He consented to her wish, and Pulcheria announced her choice to the Patriarch and to the Senate, who confirmed Marcian as her husband and emperor. There are some persons who are pious Christians, but who nevertheless hesitate to perform a good deed for fear of being falsely interpreted. Pulcheria, however, had no such dread, and although she had registered her vow to remain a virgin, she married at the age of fifty-two, and showed thereby a truer love for God and her country than if she had adhered to the mere letter of her vow. She was satisfied with having preserved her virginity before God, and thus imitated the example of the Mother of God, who remained true to her resolution before God although she had espoused St. Joseph. Pope Leo wrote many letters to Pulcheria which are yet in existence, and in which he praised the energy and perseverance with which she had defended the Catholic faith. She was faithfully assisted in her endeavors to advance the interests of religion by her husband, who was a most saintly man, and upon her death, which happened three years after her marriage, he succeeded her on the throne. He administered the government entirely in accordance with her wishes and views, and after his death he was succeeded by his son by his first marriage. In her last will and testament Pulcheria left all her vast property to the poor, and her husband saw that every word of the bequest was conscientiously fulfilled.

SS. FELIX AND REGULA.

(September 11.)

"Living and Dying for God."

TWO HUNDRED AND NINETY-SEVEN years after Christ the Theban legion of Egypt, numbering six thousand six hundred and sixty-six men, were sent by the Emperor Maximian to Switzerland to fight against the Gauls who resisted the power of the Roman Empire. Having arrived at Octodurum, in what is now Valois, they were commanded by the emperor to sacrifice to the gods, but the legion was composed entirely of Catholics, and Maurice, the chief, in the name of the whole legion refused to obey the order, whereupon the tyrant in his fury commanded every tenth man to be beheaded in order to terrify those who were

left, into submission. After the legion had been twice decimated, he had the remainder put to death, some, however, escaped among whom was a noble knight, named Felix, whose sister Regula, accompanied by Exuperantius, a faithful servant, had followed him from Egypt to Rome, and from thence to Valois. Having succeeded in reaching a place called Glarus, they lived in a cave not far from that city; by their holy lives and example they converted the surrounding pagan nations to Christianity, and built on the mount a chapel dedicated to St. Michael. Desirous, however, of carrying the light of the Gospel to other pagan nations, they left Glarus, and moved in the direction of Lake Zurich, where they finally reached the old castle of Thuricum, and the city of Thuregum.

By divine Providence they selected a spot at that place, and built a small hut near the river Limmat, on the side where now stands the Water Church. They labored zealously to instruct the pagans living near them, and were the first to preach the Gospel in that part of Switzerland. In the castle of Thuricum there lived Decius, a Roman governor, and he had been commanded by the emperor to imprison all Christians who refused to sacrifice to the gods. Having heard that Felix, Regula, and Exuperantius were Christians, he hoped to ingratiate himself with the emperor by arresting the holy Thebans; he, therefore, sent soldiers to search for them, and they were found near a well which is yet to be seen enclosed beneath the high altar of the Water Church, and is called the sacred well. St. Felix said to his sister: "The Lord has sent us trials which we must accept willingly, and by yielding ourselves to our enemies, we shall obtain the crown of martyrdom." Having finished their prayers they gave themselves up to their persecutors, and placed their only hope in Almighty God. Being brought in chains before Decius, he said to the holy Theban: "I understand that you once belonged to the Theban legion, many of whom were put to death for refusing to sacrifice to the gods." "We are Christians," answered Felix, "and will not deny our faith, so that through the infinite mercy of God we may become the companions of those who have preceded us in martyrdom, and with them partake of the joys of heaven." "You must sacrifice to the immortal gods if you wish to live," replied Decius. But the holy martyrs cried out together: "We shall not sacrifice to idols with whom you will one day perish." Decius then swore that if they would not sacrifice to Jupiter he would torture them in every conceivable manner, but they paid no heed to his threats. Enraged at their refusal to comply with his demands, the governor ordered them to be brought from the castle to the site of the present convent of Ottenbach; he then had them stripped, tied to a pillar, scourged with iron rods, and then sent back to prison. The martyrs praised God that He had thought them worthy to suffer for His holy name, and asked Him to give them strength to endure all things for His sake.

After a few days had elapsed, Decius had them brought before him again, and thinking that he might possibly induce them by kindness to deny their

faith, he said to them: "I know that you have spoken and acted in ignorance, for which reason I have pity on you, therefore sacrifice to Mars, Jupiter, and Mercury, and I promise to forgive you; but refuse, and I swear by the immortal gods, and by the wrath of the emperor, that I will throw you into a large kettle of boiling oil." He then commanded his servants to make a fire, and prepare all that was necessary for the execution of his threat, but the martyrs directed their thoughts to Almighty God who had never forsaken them, and exclaimed: "Almighty and all merciful God, we beseech Thee, strengthen and protect us in this combat, so that we may not fear whatever men may do to us." Decius ordered them to be cast into the boiling oil, which was done, but by the power of divine Providence the martyrs remained unhurt. Instead of being moved to mercy, the tyrant now commanded boiling lead to be poured over them, but still the martyrs suffered no injury, for God stood between them and all harm. Decius had them, therefore, sent back to prison, and had wheels made set with sharp knives. When all was ready, he had the martyrs brought again, and they were just about to be fastened upon the wheels, when a violent storm arose, and a thunderbolt from heaven destroyed the wheels and other instruments of torture. Enraged at this repeated failures, the tyrant said: "Because you refuse to sacrifice to the gods, you shall be thrown into a dungeon until you promise to obey me." The holy martyrs replied: "Our lives are in the hands of God, whatever you do to us, we will suffer willingly for His sake." Decius now resolved to put them to death at once, and proceeded to pass sentence. The Saints were then bound together, and taken by the executioners to the place where the Water Church in the city of Zurich now stands. The martyrs praised God the Saviour, thanked Him for all His benefits, especially for being pleased that their sufferings should now come to an end, and for rewarding them so speedily with eternal joy and happiness. The Saints and those who were present heard a voice from heaven, saying: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." This voice encouraged and comforted the martyrs, who, one after the other, for the sake of Christ and their holy religion, cheerfully offered their heads to the sword of the executioner.

ST. GUIDO.

(September 12.)

"Content."

THE only child of a poor peasant in Anderlecht, a village near Brussels, from his earliest youth led a life of wonderful piety. Guido, for this was his name, spent several hours of the day either in prayer or in taking to the poor whatever he had saved from his own frugal meal. His parents and neighbors wondered at his extraordinary piety, but Guido, desiring to serve God unseen and unpraised by men, was troubled at their respect. Going once to Laken, a pilgrimage of the Blessed Virgin, he attracted the attention of the pastor by his special earnestness, meekness, and perseverance in prayer. The priest invited Guido to stay, and take charge of the church as sexton. Regarding this offer as a providence of God, Guido rejoiced that he could now serve God without being molested, and fast whenever he chose. From that time he served like another Samuel under Heli in the temple of the Lord, and he never neglected to fulfill the least command of the excellent pastor. He kept the church well swept, the altar clean, the sacred vessels bright, and the linen without a spot or wrinkle. Those who sought him could always find him in church; envy he conquered by humility, he never gave occasion to any one to speak ill of him, he kept his flesh in submission by fasting, often remained whole nights in the church, and lived to please others without for a moment endangering his soul. At last, however, Guido was deceived by what appeared to be good. A Brussels merchant visiting him one day, expressed his astonishment that Guido could be so hospitable and liberal to those who came to see him, and yet be himself so poorly clad. He, therefore, begged him to become his partner in business as he would then have so much more to bestow in charity, to which proposition Guido consented, and resigned his situation as sexton. The first time Guido went to sea, the ship in which he had embarked was wrecked, and he lost all, so that he could no longer doubt the displeasure of God at his having left a condition of life for which he was perfectly suited. The same temptation often assails pious persons; they are either induced by others or persuadé themselves that it would be better for them to change their business or place of residence in order to make more money for the purpose of expending it in charity. If you should be tempted in such manner, dear reader, only say to yourself: "Almighty God does not want my money, but He wants me." Wherever you can do the most good, and serve God best, there is your place, and not where you can make the most money. If you have but little to give to the poor, add a fervent prayer to your offering, and the recipient of your charity will profit more by it than if you had bestowed a sack full of gold. Guido determined to

go upon a pilgrimage. He first went to Rome; from there he traveled about for some years visiting the most celebrated churches in Christendom, until he finally reached Jerusalem. On his return to Rome, he met Wondulf, the Dean of the church of Anderlecht, who with some other friends had come on a pilgrimage to Rome. When Guido first saluted them, they did not recognize him, as his beard had grown long, and he had become very pale and emaciated by long fasting.

After Guido had related all that he had seen, they with one accord entreated him to accompany them to the Holy Land, as he was not only familiar with the country and the people, but also understood their language. Guido consented, and the pilgrims, embracing him, could not sufficiently praise God for having sent them such a faithful guide. They made the journey safely, visited Jerusalem and the other holy places, but on their return they all one after the other, were carried off by a contagious disease. Wondulf gave him his ring, and begged him to go and announce his death.

Guido at length weary and exhausted reached Anderlecht, where a poor man received him most cordially. While speaking of his journey and of the death of Wondulf, the successor of the deceased Dean came to visit him, and after seeing the ring, received the holy pilgrim into his house, and kept him there until his death which soon followed in consequence of the great trials he had undergone. Many miracles happened at his grave. A church was therefore erected near the spot in which his relics were deposited, and where he is now venerated.

ST. AMATUS.

(September 13.)

"Profession of Faith."

In the canton of Valais, Switzerland, on the banks of the Rhone, there still exists the Benedictine abbey of Maurice. One thousand three hundred years ago there lived a young monk, named Amatus, for whom the discipline of the order was not severe enough, although it was one of the strictest in the church, and he, therefore, selected a spot between the high rocks where he could serve God according to the wish of his heart. He requested his brethren to bring him every third day a little bread and water, but having discovered some fertile ground between the rocks, he cleared it, and planted rye in order to live by the labor of his own hands. The Bishop of Valais had great veneration for St. Amatus, and often visited him in his seclusion; one day he brought the hermit

a sum of gold which he desired him to use or give to the poor, but Amatus said: "Give it to those who want it, I despise the temptations of the world. I came naked into the world, and naked I shall return to the earth." The Bishop notwithstanding left the money upon a small altar in the hermitage, but when Amatus found it there he threw it down the ravine, saying: "The Lord is my portion, I want no money." His fasting was so severe that during Lent he lived upon five nuts a day, and sometimes he would eat nothing for three days. St. Eustachius once came to see him, and persuaded him to leave his solitude, and go to his abbey. Amatus consented, and remained with him for some time. Here he was a perfect model of a Christian and a monk, and on account of his great eloquence he was sent to different cities to preach, but he again sought the seclusion of his cave. On Sundays, however, the servant of God came to the abbey, read some passages of the holy Scriptures, and instructed the monks, for he was filled with the Holy Ghost. He had a very attractive style of delivery, and, what was very remarkable, the tears would stream from his eyes while his whole face was beaming with smiles. One day Amatus told some of the brethren that his death would happen within a year; he, therefore, begged one of them to fill his couch with ashes, as he wished to do penance for the many sins he had committed during his life. "How can you practise such austerities now," said the brother, "when you are already worn out by severe fasting." "I have done so for a long time," answered Amatus, "and the Lord has always strengthened me, but now that my death is approaching, I desire to do public penance." He then assembled the brethren, prostrated himself before them in the ashes, and, clothed in a penitential robe, made a public confession of all the sins he could remember. Although in a dying condition, Amatus continued to pray until his last hour had arrived. Just before he expired, he said to one of the brothers: "Read for me the letter of Pope Leo to St. Flavian, for therein is contained true Catholic faith." After his request had been complied with, he said: "This I maintain, O incomprehensible Trinity, this I confess Almighty God, this I believe of Jesus Christ the Son of God, who came into this world for our salvation, and was made flesh." If such a holy man as Amatus prepared himself for death by having the fundamental rules of the Catholic faith read to him, and by making himself a profession of his faith, it shows us what is especially necessary for a happy death. Besides leading a Christian life we must also die in the true Catholic faith, for the Saviour says: "He that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark 16 : 16.) It is, therefore, very proper to make an act of faith with the dying, or to repeat for them the Apostles' creed, but whatever is necessary for a happy death is also necessary for a good life, and every Christian should daily, and with sincere devotion make an act of faith. In his great humility St. Amatus considered himself unworthy to be buried in the church where priests were always buried, but he desired them to prepare his grave before the entrance of the church, and he wrote

his own epitaph: "Christian when entering the church to pray, call upon the mercy of the Almighty in behalf of the soul of Amatus the penitent, who lies buried here, that the prayers of the many who fervently invoke the mercy of God, may effect whatever he could not obtain for himself on account of his sins." His wish was fulfilled, but in consequence of the miracles that happened at his grave his body was translated to the church with great solemnity and veneration.

BLESSED JANE OF THE CROSS.

(September 14.)

"Supernatural Life"

JANE was born of Christian parents in Asagna, a village in Spain. After the death of her mother, Jane lived in the house of a rich relative, but her whole time was spent in the performance of some religious duty or in the practice of some severe penance. When but fourteen years of age her relatives determined to give her in marriage to a wealthy young nobleman who knew and admired the great beauty and virtue of his proposed bride, but Jane had always prayed that God would allow her to become a nun, and in a vision on Good Friday it was revealed to her that her wish would be gratified. Feeling sure that she would never obtain the consent of her relatives to enter a convent, she left home secretly, and applied for admission at the Convent of St. Mary of the Cross. The Abbess assembled the sisters, and told them that a girl had made application to enter as a novice, whose face, modesty and talent were those of an angel, and she added that the Lord had surely sent her for the edification of them all. While she was speaking thus, the father of Jane accompanied by her relatives, came to seek her, and when he found her, he uttered angry and wicked words, as though she had been guilty of the most heinous sins. Jane remained as quiet as a lamb, and when her father was about to force her to return with him, she fell upon her knees, and implored him with tears to let her stay in the convent, whither the Holy Ghost had called her, when at once the hand of God touched the heart of the father, so that he not only consented, but gave her his blessing. Jane soon shone as a bright star among the sisters, by her extraordinary virtue. The mistress of novices commanded her not to speak for a year to any one except the Abbess and her confessor, which command was very pleasing to Jane as she was naturally of a very quiet disposition. When she made her profession the holy virgin resolved to endure the greatest pains

for God's sake, and meditating upon her Saviour hanging upon the cross, she said: "O my Jesus, give me pain, misery and grief, send the angels from heaven and the devils from hell to torture me, and I will suffer all patiently, for the joy that I will feel in being allowed to suffer for Thee, will be greater than any pain they can inflict!" She now commenced to fast strictly, wore a habit made of the coarsest material, and would often drink myrrh in commemoration of the vinegar and myrrh that had been offered to the Saviour on the cross.

After Jane had practised obedience for a long time in the kitchen, she was made sacristan and portress, an office which occasioned her much trouble, for as she was young, she was kept from morning until night going upon some errand. At length it was found necessary to relieve her from this duty. She was frequently discovered in an ecstasy, she was often heard to converse with her Guardian angel as one friend would with another, and when but twenty-eight years old, was elected Abbess on account of her wonderful sanctity. A child was once brought in a dying condition to the Church of the Holy Cross, and it died soon after entering the church; the afflicted parents having great confidence in the prayers of the saintly Abbess, besought her to bless the body of their dead child, so that it might be restored to life. Jane at first refused, but finally, at their repeated solicitations, she took the dead child in her arms, laid the cross which she wore, upon its breast, and made the sign of the cross over him, when at once the little one revived, and Jane gave him back to his joyful parents, perfectly restored to health. A sick nun was instantly cured by eating a piece of bread which Jane had left upon her plate. Jane was often heard to say that she would rather confess her sins publicly, than reveal the many graces she received from God. She was honored like the Apostles and Christians of the earliest times, so that she was filled by the Holy Ghost, and would announce in a wonderful manner the mysteries of God; she even spoke in strange languages which she had never heard before. St. Jane found a singular delight in listening to the songs of birds, but as God desired to dwell alone in her pure heart, He took from her the power of hearing, and gave her instead a precious token of His favor. On Good Friday, 1524, she received, while meditating upon the passion of Christ, the impression of His wounds upon her own body. On her hands and feet red marks could be seen, which emitted a sweet odor, but which caused her great suffering. They were only visible on Fridays and Saturdays, early on Sunday the pains ceased and the marks disappeared. St. Jane, however, in her humility implored the Lord in tears to remove from so unworthy a creature the visible signs of His grace. On Ascension day her prayers were heard, and the Lord said to her: "Because you desire not to have my roses, you shall have my thorns!" and she was at once attacked by inward pains as though red hot nails were driven through her. Her sufferings continued until the feast of St. Francis, the founder of her order, and on the feast of St. Clare she recovered her hearing. St. Jane had always prayed,

that God would permit her to suffer every species of torment for His sake—and for fourteen years she was so ill that she hardly knew what it was to be without pain—but a complaint never passed her lips, although her body became distorted by the terrible agony of her sufferings. The day of her death she did what the swans are said to do, she commenced to sing, and the burden of her song was: "O! my Lord, let me to Thy refuge fly."

ST. JOHN COLOBOS.

(September 15.)

"Striving after Perfection."

On January, the 17th, dear reader, we placed before you the life of one of the holy Fathers of the desert, St. Anthony; John Colobos, or the little, also belonged to them. He received that name on account of his insignificant figure; but his mind was great and strong. He chose as his guide and director in spiritual perfection a Father, who commanded him, to water every day a dry piece of wood, placed in the ground, until it grew, and brought forth fruits. This command was the more difficult to fulfill, since he had to carry the water a distance of six miles. John continued this work for a whole year without any other success, than the merit of his indefatigable obedience; the second year passed by in the same manner, and as he never once disobeyed the command of his master, the stick, in the third year, commenced to thrive and to bring forth fruits. The Father took the fruit, and showing it to the others said: "Take and eat the fruits of obedience."

If, however, a man who is striving after perfection, follows his own will, he can easily err, as is shown in the life of St. John on other occasions. Having lived for some time with one of his older companions, he one day told him, that he wished to live like the Angels, who have neither anxiety nor labor, but who continually praise and serve God. St. John, therefore, went farther into the desert, where no human being could be found; but after one week had passed, he returned and knocked at the door of his companion's hut, who asked, who was there. The answer was: "It is I, John." The brother replied: "John dwells no more among men, he has become an Angel." John continued to knock, assuring him at the same time, that it was he; but the brother let him remain outside all night long, and only at the beginning of day opened

the door, saying: "If you are an Angel, you will be able to enter my cell through closed doors; but if you are a man, you must work for your bread." John acknowledged his error, and asked forgiveness.

John once asked God, to take away from him all temptations; his prayer was heard, and he said to one of the Fathers: "You see in me a man, who lives in perfect peace, and who is free from all temptation." The Father replied: "Ask God rather for temptation, combat and humiliation, for, without combat, the soul can make no progress." John followed the advice given him, temptations and combat returned, but he wished not to be freed from them, he rather prayed for strength and perseverance; he was at the same time very careful not only to avoid sin, but also to flee from temptation.

One day, while sitting at the entrance of the church with some other brothers, who asked his advice, an old man, who heard it, was filled with envy, and said: "See, how John tries to attract young persons." John replied: "Alas! Father, what you say is only too true." The old man then said: "Your face is full of poison." "That is true, my Father," answered John, "but you only see the outside, the inside is even worse." When afterwards asked by one of the brothers, if he had not been excited inwardly by the conduct of the old man, John replied: "I am just the same inwardly as I am outwardly; this is the door of Heaven, for the Fathers have only entered the city of God by patiently suffering humiliations and insults. Humility and the fear of God excel all other virtues."

The humility of this Saint was so great, that all the other brothers considered him to be their master. Once, while working, a brother praised John's skill; but John made no reply; the other repeated his praise, but John again said nothing; and when for the third time the brother commenced his flatteries, John interrupted him, saying: "Since you have come here, you have done nothing, but try to make God leave me."

St. John compared those, who spoke of the faults of others without thinking of their own, to a man, who is perfectly naked, but who, nevertheless, laughs at the ragged garments of another.

In order to think constantly of God, he seldom thought of affairs of this world. The brothers once tempted him, saying: "We owe special gratitude to God for having sent us during this year so much rain; our palm-trees are thriving more than ever, and they have more leaves than before, so that our brothers have ample material for making mats and baskets." John replied: "The same happens to our hearts, when the Holy Ghost descends upon them; they commence, as it were, to thrive, and bring forth leaves in the fear of the Lord." When he returned from his work, or from visiting any of the Fathers, he at once commenced to pray, to meditate and to sing psalms, until he was free from all distractions, and able to think only of God.

ST. CYPRIAN.

(September 16.)

"Consolation in the Hour of Death."

ALGIERS belonged in former times to the Romans. In Carthage, its capital, there lived two hundred years after Christ a rich and eloquent man, named Cyprian, who was a pagan, and publicly defended idolatry; he was by no means a wicked man, and thus it was that, awakened by the grace of God, he became after many inward combats, a Christian.

Cyprian, besides renouncing all love for the world, and living as a true Christian, endeavored with his great talent to defend by his writings (which we still possess) the truth of Christianity in opposition to paganism. By his edifying life and his most excellent works he soon gained such celebrity that he was not only raised to the dignity of the priesthood, but, against his wish, chosen Bishop of Carthage.

The Christians had for some time remained unmolested in the practice of their religion, when at once the emperor Decius decreed a cruel and universal persecution. In every place a certain day was appointed when those who were suspected of being Christians were to appear before the judge. Whoever refused to deny his faith, and sacrifice to the gods, was put to death in the most cruel manner. Many denied their faith to save their lives; many remained firm and suffered martyrdom, and many fled before the appointed day, and although they lost their property, they saved their lives without denying their faith. St. Cyprian did so, when the hatred of the pagans was especially directed against him, so that they publicly demanded that he should be put to death. According to the Christian principle that every one is bound to preserve his life, if it can be done without committing sin, he fled accompanied by his deacon, named Victor. From the place of his concealment he wrote several letters to the Christians of Carthage, encouraging them to remain firm in their faith.

After the lapse of one year the persecution ceased, and St. Cyprian returned to his beloved flock. During his absence, however, some wicked priests had caused quarrels and disorders to arise in the Christian community, so that St. Cyprian with great difficulty restored discipline and peace. One of the priests had even been consecrated Bishop of Carthage by five Bishops who had been excommunicated, and he even tried to form a party for himself. Meanwhile a plague broke out, and carried off daily numbers of persons, so that sometimes not even one member of a family survived. The greater part of the inhabitants fled, and cruelly abandoned their friends and relatives; the streets were covered with dead bodies. St. Cyprian then distinguished himself by his charity and piety; he assembled the Christian communities, and impressed upon them the

duty of practising works of mercy not only towards Christians, but towards pagans also. Some of the Christians complained that they, like the pagans, were also attacked by the plague, and that Christianity therefore was of no advantage to them. St. Cyprian replied to them in a work entitled "Mortality."

St. Cyprian induced the rich to be liberal to the poor, and the poor to take care of the sick; he himself at the same time nursed those who were stricken down with the plague, and he collected ten thousand pieces of silver for the ransom of imprisoned Christians.

The Church had for some time enjoyed peace, when a new persecution broke out under the emperor Valerian which was principally directed against the Bishops and priests. St. Stephen, the Pope, was first arrested, and then St. Cyprian, who declared to the Pro-Consul Paternus that he was determined to remain a Christian, whereupon he was taken to the small city of Curubis.

The Saint wrote Epistles to the faithful in which he praises their firmness, courage, humility, modesty, and love, consoling them at the same time on account of their being deprived of the opportunity of hearing Mass, by proposing to them the words of the Psalmist: "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a contrite and humble heart, O God thou wilt not despise." (Ps. 50 : 19.) Meanwhile St. Cyprian was sent back to Carthage; the proconsul resided at Utica; at last the imperial decree arrived from Rome that all the Catholic Bishops and priests should be put to death; the proconsul, therefore, desired to have St. Cyprian brought to Utica in order to put him to death in that city, but Cyprian concealed himself, because he wished to confess the Lord in Carthage, and to glorify by his confession the community of which he had been the pastor. Only when the proconsul had returned to Carthage did the Saint give himself up to the authorities, and as soon as the Christians heard of his imprisonment, they were filled with terror and consternation; even the pagans showed great compassion, because they remembered his exceeding charity towards them in the time of the plague. A great number of persons assembled in Carthage.

After a short trial and an explicit declaration from St. Cyprian that he was a Christian, and would not sacrifice to the gods, the proconsul had his sentence read to him, which was that he should be beheaded, and the Saint answered: "Deo gratias!" (Thanks be to God!) The Christians who were present, cried out with a loud voice that they also wished to be beheaded. Having arrived at the place of execution, he told his friends to give twenty-five pieces of gold to the executioner, and then tied the handkerchief himself around his eyes. The Christians spread cloth upon the ground in order to catch his blood, and they buried him most solemnly in the night by the light of torches. Two churches were afterwards built in his honor, one upon his place of execution, and the other over his grave.

ST. HILDEGARDIS.

(September 17.)

"Visions."

THE parents of Hildegardis were of noble descent, and led a very pious life in the castle of Beckelheim on the Rhine, near Bingen; they sent their daughter when only eight years old to the convent of Dissibodenberg, where Jutta, a pious religious, instructed her in the service of God. The girl increased wonderfully in all the virtues, in love, humility, fasting, silence, and patience, in which later virtue she was continually tried even from her childhood by being afflicted with painful diseases, so that her life was but a preparation for death.

Hildegardis was forty-two years old when she was commanded by the Almighty to write down whatever she saw and heard, and as she from humility delayed to communicate her visions to others she was afflicted with a long and painful sickness. At length, moved by fear and humility,, she revealed to her spiritual director the cause of her sickness. The monk mentioned the affair to his Abbot and to the most prudent monks, who were of the opinion that Hildegardis was really enlightened by Almighty God, and for this reason she was bound to reveal her visions. As soon as Hildegardis resolved to do so, she was at once restored to health. When the first revelations of the pious virgin were communicated to the Archbishop of Mentz, he considered it so important that he presented them to Pope Eugene III., then present at Treves. The Pope sent commissioners to the convent to examine the matter; they brought the writings of St. Hildegardis to Treves where the Pope read some of them to the Cardinals and members of the Council, among whom was St. Bernard, and they unanimously declared the contents to be divinely inspired.

The pious virgin was greatly consoled and encouraged thereby, especially as some envious persons had called her revelations the effect of an overheated imagination. St. Bernard wrote her a letter congratulating her upon possessing the grace of God within her, but he also warned her not to lose her humility.

The report of her revelations now spread, and a great number of noble virgins, who desired to lead a pious life under the direction of Hildegardis, came to see her, for she was meanwhile chosen Abbess of the convent. As the number of religious increased, she was advised in a vision to erect a new convent on Rupertsberg, near Bingen.

Hildegardis with eighteen other nuns took possession of the new convent, and she was truly a spiritual mother to them, for whenever she found that the nuns disagreed among themselves, or were careless in the discharge of their duties, or became sad and discontented, she would lead them with safety to the way of perfection.

Popes, princes, and learned men wrote to her for counsel, and recommended themselves to her prayers.

The holy life and the many cures performed in answer to her prayers are an evidence that her visions were not the effect of imagination, nor come from the evil spirit, but from God alone. It is true she had during her whole life to contend with illness, slander, and other adversities, but all these evils were sent to her by Almighty God in order that she might remain humble.

ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA.

(September 18.)

"Spiritual Inheritance."

THIS Saint, even when a child, showed wonderful pleasure in almsgiving; when proceeding to school, he would give his breakfast or supper to the first beggar he met; he several times came home without shoes, stockings, coat or even pantaloons, as he had given them to poor children, who, on account of their nakedness, were nearly frozen to death; once in the winter-season he gave away all his clothes, except his shirt, and when a new suit of clothes was made for him, he at once exchanged them for the rags of a beggar boy, and when his mother remonstrated with him, he said, that the rags of the poor boy were more becoming to him, and the new suit more becoming to the poor lad. As often as he had money, eggs or any thing else to eat, he would carry it at once to the poor, and became, as it were, their provider. St. Thomas showed during his whole life the same extraordinary charity and liberality, towards the poor. Whence came it, that this virtue throve so beautifully in his youthful heart, bringing forth such abundant fruits? From the grace of God and his parents; for experience teaches us, that the qualities of the parents are like the features and any bodily resemblance, hereditary; secondly, children imitate the example, which they have constantly before them in the house, and are generally even induced to follow the predominant inclinations of the parents, as for instance, avarice or charity. We can, therefore, justly say: a particular sin or virtue of the parents belongs not to them alone, but is also multiplied in their children. This is shown in the life of St. Thomas, whose parents were so liberal to the poor, that they gradually divided all their wealth among them. The mother was on this account called among the people the almoner, and young

Thomas knew too well, that he would not displease his parents by giving alms to the poor; for he acted according to their own spirit. Once, when all alone at home, some beggars made their appearance at the door, and as he could not find the key of the money-chest, he gave them six young chickens, and when afterwards his mother reproached him for doing so, he said: "I had pity on the poor, and if another one had come, I would have given the hen also, rather than let him go without any alms."

Thomas entered the Augustinian Convent of Salamanca, where, as a novice, he surpassed all the other religious in meekness, love and humility. He never spoke, except when questioned, remained in his cell in as far as his duty permitted, and there gave himself up entirely to God. He slept only four or five hours; and in Advent and Lent his bed was a bare plank. When he was afterwards called upon to preach, such eloquence flowed from his mouth, that he was called another Elias. So extraordinary was the effect of his sermons, that he was considered the best preacher in Spain, and both the Emperor Charles V. and the king of Portugal desired him to become Court-preacher.

Thomas, although against his will, was forced to accept the management of the most important affairs. The archiepiscopal see of Granada was offered to St. Thomas, but he refused; finally he became Archbishop of Valencia, because his superiors threatened him with excommunication, in case he refused to accept. Having arrived in the city, he was solemnly and joyfully received; the canons made him a present of 4,000 ducats, because they knew, that he was very poor. The Saint most gratefully accepted the gift, but sent the money to the hospital, which had been considerably damaged by fire. In order to assist the poor, he lived most frugally; he wore for several years the same habit which he had worn in the convent, until it could be no longer mended. It once happened, that when a Canon entered his room, he found the Archbishop mending his clothes. The Canon said: "Is it possible, your Lordship, that you spend your time in such a manner? the tailor for a few cents would do it better and quicker." The Saint replied: "Although an Archbishop, I have as a Religious made the vow of poverty, and the money which I would have to pay the tailor, belongs to the poor." When the Canon told him, that as an Archbishop he should be better dressed, he said: "The authority and dignity of the office consists not in fine clothes, but in the zeal and watchfulness I exercise over the flock confided to me." His steward, who once bought a fish, for which he had paid a large sum, was obliged to carry it back, for the Archbishop preferred to give the money to some poor persons, rather than to spend it on himself.

His zeal as a Pastor was exceedingly great, for, like our Saviour, he not only preached in many places, but he frequently passed whole nights in prayer, and in order to make his prayer acceptable, he sprinkled it, as it were, with tears and blood, by scourging himself at the same time. The Archbishop once

summoned a very bad priest to appear before him. To convert him he not only used words, but even blows, which, however, he inflicted not upon the priest, but upon himself; for he accused himself before the priest of being the cause by his indulgence of the priest's excesses, and he, therefore, merited a severe punishment. He then knelt before the crucifix, laid aside his habit, and commenced to scourge himself in such a manner, that his clothes were saturated with blood. The priest, thunderstruck at such a sight, commenced to weep bitterly over his sins; he then threw himself before the Archbishop begging him for God's sake to cease, as he alone had deserved the punishment, and he promised in future to be faithful to his sacred office, which promise he kept. The Archbishop more than once scourged himself for others, so that for several days the wounds inflicted upon his body remained open. At another time the Saint prayed for a priest, whom on account of his great crimes he had been obliged to send to prison, and it seemed to him, that the crucifix, before which he knelt, was sweating blood, when suddenly the warden of the prison entered informing him, that the priest had hung himself. St. Thomas ran to the prison, and there found the unhappy man lifeless; he, nevertheless, prayed most fervently over the body, which the soul had left, and for the soul, which God had forsaken, and he ceased not to pray, till the priest came to life and said: "Pardon me, Archbishop, for by your prayers I have been freed from the darkness of error, and now I enjoy again the light of truth." The Saint most kindly exhorted him, not to despair of the mercy of God, and to remember the precious blood, with which his God and Saviour had ransomed him. The priest was entirely converted, retired to a monastery, and lived until his death the life of a true penitent.

The Archbishop spent his yearly income of 18,000 ducats to the last penny, although he expended very little on his own person. A troop of beggars, 500 in number, came nearly every day to his house, each one of whom received a plate full of soup, some wine and a piece of money. He expressly told his steward: "*Give to all, give cheerfully, and give with a good heart.*"

When he heard that a person had no work, he assisted him unasked. He was a special friend of the orphans; during the eleven years of his Archiepiscopal office no orphan or poor girl was married without having received a dowry from him. In the city of Valencia wicked persons rid themselves of their children by leaving them at night before the doors of other persons; but the Saint endeavored to have these children taken care of, and to have them educated at his own expense; he even gave a ducat to any one who brought him a foundling.

In the life of this Saint several miracles are related similar to that of the multiplication of the loaves. If in his unbounded liberality and confidence in God he had given away all he had, and still more was wanted, he found without any human assistance his wants supplied.

St. Thomas, fearing lest he might lose his soul in the administration of his

high office, had frequently petitioned the Holy Father to be relieved of it, so as to return to his convent; but he had to wait, until Almighty God Himself removed the burden from him. While praying, the Lord revealed to him, that in six months, on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, he would come to Him, and when the Saint in the beginning of September fell sick, the people were filled with sadness, as if it had been Good Friday; they held processions for the recovery of their Archbishop, and when the procession arrived at the Church of St. Thomas, the weeping and lamentations of the people became so great, that the chanters and the priest could not continue the High Mass. The dying Saint, four days before his death, commanded his steward to divide all his money among the poor; on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin he gave away all his furniture, except the bed upon which he lay, which he presented to the warden of the prison, requesting him at the same time, to let him use it until he died. He then raised his eyes and hands, and said: "Lord Jesus Christ, I praise and thank Thee, that I possess nothing, and can leave this world as a poor Religious." He had mass said in his room, and after having received holy communion he died, saying: "O Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit!" After his death there was as much lamentation throughout the city, as if it had been taken by the enemy, and nearly 8,000 poor persons were present at his funeral.

We cannot honor the memory of a Saint better than by doing something, that would be pleasing to him, were he alive. Therefore, dear reader, honor the feast of St. Thomas, the great benefactor of the poor; imitate his example to-day, and in his honor give an alm to the poor, but as long as you live, remember his words: "What better use can you make of your temporal goods, than to obtain by them the pardon of your sins? Do you wish your prayers to be heard by Almighty God, hear the petition of the poor; do you wish to be helped by the Lord in your necessities, attend first to those, who are in want; assist those especially, who are ashamed to beg; to let them wait for alms, would be the same as to let them wait until they have money enough to buy what they want.'"

ST. POMPOSA.

(September 19.)

"Seeking Martyrdom.'

At the time when St. Columba suffered martyrdom, there lived in a convent near Cordova, which had been erected by her parents and relatives, a pious virgin, named Pomposa, who, although the youngest of the nuns, surpassed them all in perfect innocence, purity, and holiness. Her greatest happiness consisted in reading and meditating on the holy Scriptures, and if any one offended her, she suffered it most humbly and patiently. While this pious virgin served God faithfully in watching, praying, and meditating, she heard of the martyrdom of St. Columba, and it created within her such a joyful emotion that she most fervently desired to suffer martyrdom for Christ's sake. She spoke to no one of of her wish, because formerly she had expressed her desire to die for Christ, but was carefully watched, and thus prevented from giving herself up to the Saracens.

It happened the night after Pomposa had heard of the death of St. Columba, on the nineteenth of September, that the key had remained in the convent door; after matins she opened the door and went to Cordova, a distance of fifteen miles. She arrived there at daybreak, and at once gave herself up to the Saracen judge.

There Pomposa proved that all must believe in Christ, and that Mahomet was a false prophet and a deceiver; whereupon she was sentenced to be beheaded. Her body was thrown into the river, but drawn out by some merchants, and buried. Twenty days later some monks disinterred the body of the Saint, carried it to the church of St. Eulalia, and buried it by the side of St. Columba. In this manner the two virgins and martyrs became companions in death, as they had been also companions in life.

Here now arises the question: Is it allowed for us to seek martyrdom, as Pomposa and many others have done? And if not, can we venerate them as martyrs? The answer is that we are not allowed to seek death when without committing sin we can preserve our life; but it is quite different if Almighty God calls upon man to suffer martyrdom. How then can we know that we have received such an extraordinary calling? It is generally known by the following marks: If any one who has lived a pious life is continually incited to suffer martyrdom, and suffers martyrdom with firmness and even cheerfulness, we must admit that he came to that determination by the inspiration of God; but whoever seeks martyrdom out of indiscretion, stubborness, desire of notoriety, or spiritual pride, will, when the time has come for him to suffer, lose not only his courage and firmness, but frequently even deny his faith. St. Pomposa, how-

ever, possessed all the marks of a true martyr, blessed by the Almighty. The reason why God incited these Christians to seek martyrdom can be easily explained from the circumstances of their time. The reign of the Saracens had greatly weakened the Christians, so that many out of fear renounced Christianity. St. Eulogius in speaking of this, says: "The prince of the Saracens gloried so much in the distress of the Church that he would have prepared even greater afflictions for Christians, and if he had ruled longer he would have humbled the Christian Church everywhere. 'Where is,' said he, 'the boasted firmness of the martyrs? What has become of the courage and the power of your Christian heroes? Where is your boldness concealed? Why do you not combat Mahomet our prophet? Let them come and fight for truth!' At these mockeries of the infidels it was glorious and advantageous to the Catholic Church that holy persons, especially virgins, were inspired by the Almighty to suffer voluntary martyrdom. By such heroic deeds of weak and feeble women, the timid Christians were strengthened in the faith, the mouth of the slanderers were closed, and the Saracens were obliged to acknowledge that they gloried in vain in having overcome the courage and religion of the Christians, for which they desired to die, since even defenseless virgins longed to shed their blood for the faith.

ST. FAUSTA.

(September 20.)

"Miracles."

THERE are many lives of the Saints, and that of St. Fausta is one, in which such extraordinary miracles are related that they almost surpass belief.

The acts of St. Fausta relate as follows: "When the Emperor Maximinian heard that a certain virgin, named Fausta, the daughter of Gamellus, had become an orphan in her thirteenth year, and had been brought up in the Christian religion, he sent Evilasius, a courtier of the highest rank, to Cyzicus to search for her, and to persuade her to sacrifice to the gods. He commanded her to sacrifice, but Fausta said: 'O Evilasius, I shall never sacrifice to gods who are deaf and blind, and are the work of man; I have my Saviour Jesus Christ who is in heaven, and I cannot leave Him if I do not wish to lose the reward he has promised me.' Evilasius, however, replied: 'Listen to me, Fausta, as your father, and sacrifice to the great god Jupiter, to Mars, to Apollo, and Æsculapius; I know you will obey if you hear the evil consequences of disobedience.'

Fausta said: 'Do not think that I am foolish, although young, my heart belongs entirely to God.' Evilasius then commanded her veil to be removed from her face; the virgin, however, said nothing, but looked up to heaven, where she saw her beloved Lord Jesus Christ. Evilasius now commanded the servants to bring in some irons; 'for,' said the tyrant, 'if she does not feel the torments of these instruments of martyrdom, she will not consent to sacrifice.' The servants obeyed, and brought in the irons, when Evilasius said to Fausta: 'Do you see the irons with which you are to be tortured?' The virgin replied: 'I see them, cruel murderer, but my heart is not affrighted!' Filled with anger, Evilasius commanded them to tie her up and scourge her, and while this was being done, she lifted up her eyes to heaven, saying: 'O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who didst assist the three youths in the furnace, who didst save Daniel from the jaws of the lions, who didst lead Moses through the Red sea as if through dry land, who didst deliver Peter from prison and chains, and who canst make the earth tremble with one look, have mercy on me a sinner!' And at once lightning appeared in the heavens, and Evilasius seeing it, feared, believing it to be the work of magic, and that he and his servants would be destroyed; he, therefore, said: 'Fausta, you mock me, and perform works of magic!' The Saint replied: 'Evilasius, if you had a statue which you would endeavor to torture, you would labor in vain; when I am tortured I feel just as much as a statue does, therefore your efforts are useless; you have power over my body, but my soul belongs to God,' Evilasius, hearing this, commanded a bench to be brought in upon which the virgin was fastened, and the executioners were ordered to saw her body in two. When they commenced to saw, St. Fausta said with David: 'I will fear no evils, for thou art with me.' (Ps. 22 : 4.)

"The executioners exerted their strength in vain; they went to Evilasius, and told him that for several hours they had tried to obey, that they had changed the saws, and had even endeavored to burn her alive, but all without success. Evilasius, hearing this, became confused, and said to Fausta: 'You mock me with your works of magic; I am eighty years old, and have never seen such things. I promise by the life of the emperor and all the gods that nothing shall be done to you if you consent to sacrifice; but if you refuse, I myself may have to answer for your obstinacy with my life; I see that I cannot harm you, and combat against God; now tell me the truth!' Fausta then said: 'Listen, for what I will tell you are words of divine power, and can induce you to become a Christian.' Evilasius then took her aside in order to hear more from her concerning Christianity, and she convinced him clearly of the truth of the Christian faith. When Evilasius heard the holy virgin speak of the infinite mercy of God, the Holy Ghost opened his heart; he was converted, and fearing neither the command of the emperor, nor the loss of his office, he commanded Fausta to be set at liberty. One of his servants, however, ran to the emperor, saying that Evilasius would become a Christian if he was not at once arrested. The emperor,

therefore, sent for one of his prefects, and said: 'Swear that you will not adhere to those who confess Christ!' The prefect, after having taken the oath, was then sent to Cyzicus in order to arrest Evilasius, whom, when brought before him, he thus addressed: 'Foolish man, how could you leave the gods, and become a Christian?' Evilasius replied: 'If you only believed in the living and eternal God, you would be happy, but what you now worship are devils and not gods.' The prefect commanded him to be tortured. Evilasius then cried out with a loud voice: 'Fausta, dove of Christ, pure and without stain, pray to your bridegroom for me, your former tormentor; you have brought me to the light, and freed me from darkness; you have delivered me from Satan; assist me, and be not angry with me on account of the pains I have inflicted upon you, be, I beseech you, an intercessor for me on the day of salvation.' When Fausta heard the entreaties of Evilasius, she forgot all her former torments, and said: 'O my Lord, hear my petition, and receive Evilasius into Thy flock, and number him among Thy elect!' When the prefect heard that Evilasius had been brought to the truth of the Christian religion, he commanded Fausta to appear before him, and said: 'Wretched woman, you have persuaded one who worshipped the gods to forsake them, and to worship your God.' 'I firmly believe,' replied Fausta, 'that the Almighty who has made Evilasius, formerly an idolator, now a son of truth, will call you also.' 'You must not think,' said the prefect, 'that you deal with Evilasius; I will have your flesh pierced in honor of the gods whom you will not worship.' 'My body is in your power,' replied the Saint, 'do with it as you like. Filled with anger, the prefect commanded her feet and hands to be pierced with nails, but the servant of God suffered no pain whatever. The prefect, seeing that this punishment was not sufficient, then called his servants, saying: 'Whoever can devise the most cruel punishment, shall be rewarded!' And a man, named Claudius came forward, saying: 'Let her be thrown before the wild beasts.' The prefect at once commanded the executioner to carry her to the theatre where a lioness was let loose upon her, but the ferocious animal acted as if filled with veneration for the Saint. The prefect, seeing this, commanded all the wild beasts to be let loose, but all of them lay down at the feet of Fausta. Although a witness to this miracle, the prefect commanded her to be stripped, but Fausta praying to the Lord, said: 'O Lord Jesus Christ, cover Thy creature!' And at once her naked body was covered by a cloud. The prefect's anger increased, and he again said to his servants: 'Whoever can suggest to me the most cruel punishment, shall be elevated in rank, and rewarded besides.' A certain Eusebius then said to the prefect: 'Give her over to me, I will induce her to sacrifice.'' The prefect then consented, and with a hammer he drove nails into her head, forehead, face, chest, and legs. The Saint, however, prayed: 'Jesus Christ, Sun of Justice, Crown of the Saints, who hast called me a poor sinner, enlighten this prefect that he may know Thee!' Eusebius then erected a pile, threw pitch on it, and had Fausta and

Evilasius burned alive, while they praised God in the flames. The prefect also became a Christian, and suffered martyrdom.

"Maximinian on hearing of what had happened, cursed his gods, because they had not protected his servants against the Christians; the Christians, however, who were present, buried the bodies of the Saints, and praised God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to whom belongs honor, glory, and power now and forever. Amen."

ST. MATTHEW THE EVANGELIST.

(September 21.)

"The Holy Scriptures"

MATTHEW, also called Levi, was a publican. The Romans sent officers to the conquered countries to collect taxes; these officers appointed inferior officers from among the inhabitants of the country, and these publicans tried to become rich, and were thus frequently guilty of the most cruel extortions. For this reason, and because they accepted offices from the Romans, the enemies of their country, the Jews considered the publicans as dishonorable, and would not even walk with them. Such a publican was Matthew; he had his office on the lake of Genesareth, where he received the duties or taxes on goods landed in ships near Capharnaum. Our Saviour passing by one day, saw the publican sitting at his money-table, and said: "Follow me!" Matthew rose at once, left everything, and followed Him; for He who called him with words, touched his heart with grace.

Afterwards Matthew invited the Saviour and His disciples to dinner, and as he probably desired that some of his former friends, and those following the same occupation might be converted by seeing and hearing the Lord, he invited them also. The Pharisees were scandalized that Christ would eat with publicans, and men that were decried as sinners; but the Lord gave the following consoling answer: "Jesus hearing this, saith to them: They that are well have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: for I came not to call the just but sinners." (Mark 2: 17.)

From that time Matthew remained an Apostle of the Lord, never again returning to his former occupation. After the resurrection of the Lord, he preached for some time in Judea; it was not, however, his vocation to remain there, but to bring the light of faith to pagan countries. He wrote the gospel or life of Christ which he left to the converted Jews as a recompense for the loss of his person.

The Gospel of St. Matthew is the first work, in which the life of our Saviour was recorded, and is, therefore, set in front of the New Testament; it was originally written in the Syriac-Chaldaic, and afterwards translated into Greek, as it is still to be found. Matthew called his writings *Gospel*, that is Good News. The title perfectly corresponds with the contents, because they announce to all men, even the most wicked, forgiveness, pardon, redemption, sanctification, adoption as sons of God, and eternal happiness through Jesus Christ. As the above can be applied also to the other parts of the holy Scriptures of the new law, and as it is important to all Christians to know how to regard the holy Scriptures, we will remark: First of all, it is to be considered that the holy Scriptures do not fully contain the teachings of Christ and of His Apostles; for Christ has in no place commanded the Apostles to *write*, but to *teach*; at the same time the greater proportion of men cannot read, although they must be saved by the word of God, it, therefore, depends principally upon their hearing the teachings of Christ by word of mouth. Some of the Apostles wrote nothing, and those who wrote did so long after the birth of Christ; St. Matthew about fifty years, and St. John even seventy years later. Besides the single parts of the Scriptures were written on special occasions; thus, for instance, St. Matthew wrote his Gospel by the invitation of the Jews, St. John wrote his Gospel against a heresy which just then had sprung up, but none of the Evangelists intended to make a complete explanation of the Christian religion in a single work, so that we should need nothing more. It is, therefore, a great mistake for Protestants to believe that the teachings of Christ and His Apostles are all contained in the holy Scriptures.

The holy Scriptures contain certain and infallible truth; it is the word of God Himself, because the Evangelists and Apostles were enlightened and directed by the Holy Ghost. St. Augustine says that we should listen to the word of God with as much devotion as if Christ Himself appeared, and taught us. We, therefore, rise when the Gospel is read, and in the East the candles are lighted.

It is a great error for any one reading the holy Scriptures to invent a religion of his own from it, instead of adhering to the explanation given by the Catholic Church; for in the first place they do not even know if the translation is correct; secondly, many passages can only be understood by having an accurate knowledge of the country, the people, their customs, their manner of speaking and of the circumstances of the time, all of which can only be known by learned men, and still even the most learned cannot understand everything. For this reason we find among non-Catholics a thousand different interpretations of the holy Scriptures, each one contradicting the other. Whoever, therefore, reads the Bible, should adhere to the explanation given by the Catholic Church; but whoever explains them according to his own opinion, will be in danger of losing his faith just as the holy Communion will be ruinous to him who receives

it unworthily or without proper preparation. St. Matthew, after having converted many Jews, preached the Gospel to the heathen of the East. It is not known where or in what manner he died; some say that he suffered martyrdom by being burned alive, others maintain that by his prayers the flames were extinguished, and that he died in peace in Nubia.

It was a beautiful providence of God that the Gospel of St. Matthew forms the beginning of the holy Scriptures; for Matthew was a sinner, became converted, and followed the Lord; he, therefore, should before all others announce by his Gospel the good tidings to the world, that Christ had come to seek that which had been lost. In this manner every sinner, who is alarmed at his many sins, will know by the example as also by the writings of St. Matthew that he can hope everything from the mercy of God if he is truly converted, and follows Christ. We can then say that the Gospel of St. Matthew is the Gospel of sinners. He does not call himself Levi, but Matthew, his publican name, so that by acknowledging his own guilt, the grace of God, which calls sinners to be Apostles, and changing them into Saints, may be more and more glorified.

ST. MAURICE.

(September 22.)

"Resistance."

Egypt, in olden times, was so large that there were twenty thousand cities within its limits, and so rich that it was called the granary of the world. From Thebes, the capital, all the kings of Egypt were chosen. After our Lord's ascension, St. Mark preached the Gospel in Egypt, and especially in Thebes. In this city St. Maurice and his glorious companions were born, for which reason they were called the Theban Legion. From his very youth Maurice evinced a desire to become a soldier, and he afterwards proved himself an excellent officer; for when Achilles endeavored to overthrow the Roman government in Egypt, the Roman Emperors Diocletian and Maximin, although with great loss to the Roman armies, subdued the rebellion; Thebes and the Theban legion had during the revolution remained faithful to the Romans, for which reason the city was specially favored by the emperors, and Maurice placed in command of the legion. The Saint had the greatest influence over his men, because they were nearly all faithful and good Christians, who, having their winter-quarters near the Holy Land, promised out of devotion to God and for the salvation of their soul to visit Jerusalem and the holy places. The holy Bishop Zambda of Jerusalem

received them very kindly, and baptized those who were not as yet baptized, and administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to all.

About the year 286 a rebellion against the Roman government broke out in Gaul, and the Emperors Diocletian and Maximin determined not only to persecute, but also to exterminate the Christian religion in Gaul. Maximin was sent to Gaul, while Diocletian remained in Italy, and he summoned the Theban legion to Egypt to reinforce the army of Maximin. When the imperial decree reached Maurice and his cousin Secundus, they made known to the legion the will of the emperor, and all were ready to fight for their emperor. They arrived safely in Italy, and at Rome they went to see the emperor who received them kindly, but they also visited the Pope Marcellinus, telling him that they were Christians, and belonged to his flock. The Pope was rejoiced to see such a large number of Christian soldiers, and was at the same time astonished to see them so openly and freely confess their faith before the emperors who were the most cruel persecutors of the Catholic faith. The Pope then exhorted them not only to remain true and faithful, but, if necessary, even to shed their blood for their religion, and he gave them his apostolic blessing.

The number of soldiers composing the legion was six thousand six hundred and sixty-six, and after having crossed the Alps, some companies were sent to the Rhine, while the rest joined the army of Maximin on the banks of the lake of Geneva, at a place called Octodurum. Before giving battle to the enemy, the enemy, the emperor ordered a great sacrifice to be offered to the gods, accompanied by games and ceremonies usual on such occasions; but not only Maurice and his legion, but all the other Christians belonging to the Roman army withdrew from this idolatrous rite, especially as they had discovered that the emperor intended to persecute and exterminate the Christians. Secundus, who was held in great estimation at the imperial court, remonstrated with Maximin, for doing which he was beheaded. His body was deposited at Turin. Maurice and his legion now thought it advisable to retire from the camp in order to escape the anger and the cruel mandates of Maximin, and therefore pitched their camps at a place called Aganun (now St. Maurice), about three leagues from Octodurum, where was the main army of Maximin. As soon as the emperor heard of the departure of Maurice and his legion, he sent messengers to them kindly inviting them to return; but the whole legion with one voice refused either to join in the idolatrous sacrifice or to be led against their fellow-Christians, when Maximin, filled with anger, ordered that every tenth man of the legion without distinction should be beheaded in punishment of their disobedience. When the executioners arrived, the pious Thebans determined to remain true to their faith, and, desirous of obtaining the crown of martyrdom, rejoiced as though they had been elected to a great honor. Thus six hundred and sixty-six Thebans were put to death. Shortly afterwards the messengers of the emperor again made their appearance inviting Maurice and the rest of his legion to return, adding meantime that if

they disobeyed all should be put to death. The legion again refused, and a second time it was decimated. The officers constantly encouraged those that were left rather to perish than to yield, and when summoned for the third time they again refused. "We are thy soldiers,' said Maurice to the emperor, 'but we are also the soldiers of Jesus Christ. From thee we receive our pay, but from Him we have received eternal life. To thee we owe service, to Him obedience. We are ready to follow thee against the barbarians, but we are also ready to suffer death rather than renounce our faith, or fight against our Christian brothers." Thus spoke Maurice with the true courage becoming a Christian warrior; but the cruel tyrant, unmoved by such generous heroism, gave orders that the army should surround the devoted legion, and that a general massacre should take place, not leaving one alive, and he was obeyed. No resistance was made on the part of the Thebans, who flung away their arms, and in emulation of their divine Master resigned themselves as sheep to the slaughter. Some were trampled down by the cavalry, some hung on trees, and shot with arrows, others beheaded; but the greatest cruelty was shown to the officers, especially to St. Maurice, who, like the ringleaders of a rebellion, were beaten, kicked, wounded, and finally, while kneeling down, put to death with the sword. The whole field was filled with the bodies of the holy martyrs, who lay scattered about everywhere, and their blood ran through the fields into the river Rhone.

ST. THECLA.

(September 23.)

"Reversing the Law of Nature."

Of this Saint St. Gregory of Nice says: "Her life was a mixture of myrrh and of the lily of charity, which St. Paul dropped from his lips into the ears of a holy virgin. This virgin was blessed Thecla, who in a well prepared soul received this precious mixture, and resolved to mortify the outward man by extinguishing within herself all worldly thoughts and pleasures. After receiving instruction from St. Paul, she was dead to all the passions of her youth, dead to her beauty, and to all the senses of her body. Nothing living remained in her, but her spirit and her reason, so that the whole world was dead to her, as she was dead to the whole world."

Distinguished for uncommon talent and knowledge, St. Thecla was betrothed to a young man who possessed every quality to win a maiden's heart. He was young and handsome, the son of the first and richest family of Iconia, and of a

kind and generous disposition. At the same time Thecla had the good fortune to hear St. Paul preach, and she was so impressed with what she heard that at once the desire arose in her heart never to marry. As soon as her parents heard of it they reproached her; the mother commanded her to be obedient and to marry; the bridegroom implored her to reconsider her determination, her relatives endeavored to persuade her, the servants besought her with tears, and even the judge tried to intimidate her by threatening her with punishment if she did not marry; but strengthened by divine grace the holy virgin could not be overcome.

As soon as Thecla found an opportunity to escape, she went to St. Paul in order to hear him preach again; she left her mother, a house filled with riches, the splendor of her position, the company of her equals, the country and all its charms with which Satan tried to captivate her, and endeavored only to seek Christ, and to be loved by Him. Her former lover overtook her while on the way, and brought her back, and as she firmly refused to marry him, she was accused by him of being a Christian, and was sentenced to be thrown before the wild beasts. St. Ambrose in his book on virginity writes: "By Thecla it may be seen how we should sacrifice ourselves; fleeing from the bonds of wedlock, condemned by the fury of her betrothed, she even changed the nature of the wild beasts by the power of her virginity. This we can see by the lion throwing himself upon the ground, and licking her feet, thereby showing that he could not violate the blessed body of the virgin. The wild animal respected his prey, and, forgetting his own nature, assumed the humanity which men had lost. There, in a certain perversity of nature, we can see men become like beasts, and a lion, by kissing the feet of the virgin, shows them how men should act. Virginity possesses such remarkable qualities that even lions admire it. The famished lions were not tempted by the sight of food, although provoked they were not angry, although bloodthirsty they overcame their thirst, although wild they were not governed by their nature. The lions preached religion by venerating the martyr, they preached chastity by kissing the feet of the virgin, and by casting down their eyes they showed that they were abashed at the sight of a naked virgin."

An attempt was made to burn the holy virgin alive; but the same Lord who had protected her against the wild beasts, protected her now also against the flames. Thecla descended unhurt from the pile, and escaped with the assistance of God not only the persecutions of her lover, but also those of her father. Although we are not certain whether St. Thecla died a natural death or that of martyrdom, she is counted among the martyrs, and venerated as the first martyr of her sex; for in the early ages those were justly counted among the martyrs who suffered for the faith, although with the assistance of God they remained unhurt.

Thecla died in Isauria, and was buried in Seleucia, the capital of the country.

A church was built over her grave which received her name, frequented by pilgrims from all parts for the miracles performed there. St. Basil who, in the fifth century, was Bishop of Seleucia, writes in relation to the many and great miracles performed through the intercession of St. Thecla: "St. Thecla is distinguished among the Saints; she is always present, always ready for those who invoke her, the healthy and sick, the cheerful and sorrowful, those who come by water or by land, those who are in, and those who are out of danger; families, cities, nations, foreigners, and persons of her own country, inhabitants and strangers, men, women, lords, servants, old, young, poor, superiors, private persons, soldiers, and officers. She showed herself even to Jews, and cured them in order to confound and admonish them. In short, she assists all men, and as she punishes the wicked, she never ceases to be attentive to the pious."

ST. GERARD.

(September 24.)

"Futurity."

THIS Saint was born in Venice, and from his earliest youth endeavored to serve God by faithfully observing His holy commandments. When a boy, he took the religious habit, avoided the road trodden by our first parents, and followed the narrow path of a new man born according to the spirit of God, and sought no other pleasures than those of heaven. Leading thus a pure and holy life, he desired to visit the sepulchre of our Lord, and become poor and follow Him who became poor for us. Gerard, therefore, left his country and family, and, traveling eastward, arrived in Hungary.

He intended to go to Jerusalem, but was prevented from carrying out his design. King Stephen of Hungary was a Saint, and eager to procure holy men to convert his people, nearly all of whom were heathen. Hearing, therefore, of Gerard's intended journey, he felt well disposed towards him, and in the hope that Gerard could succeed in converting his pagan subjects he kept him. Gerard, however, not desiring to remain at the king's palace, went into a wilderness in the county of Beel, and there, in company with another monk named Maurus, lived for seven years a life of seclusion, and served God in fasting and praying.

Meanwhile King Stephen not only destroyed the wickedness and cruel habits of the heathen, but he also prepared their hearts to receive the seed of the holy faith, and as peace reigned throughout his kingdom, he called the servant of

God from his seclusion in order to preach to his people. Gerard was chosen Bishop, and so great was his kindness that all the inhabitants of that province loved and respected him as a father. The number of faithful daily increased, and the holy Bishop erected churches in the different cities; his cathedral he built in honor of St. George, martyr, near the shore of the river Merish, and King Stephen liberally and richly endowed it with lands.

The blessed Bishop cherished a great devotion towards the Blessed Virgin, so that if any sinner asked pardon of him in the name of the Mother of Christ, he would burst into tears, assuring the guilty one that he received him as a son if he truly venerated Mary as the Mother of God. He introduced the custom among the Hungarians of calling the Mother of God our Lady, and so devoted were they towards the Blessed Virgin that King Stephen called them the family of Mary.

Gerard was very careful in the administration of his ecclesiastical functions, observing even the least important of them with the utmost attention. He frequently during the night placed a leper in his bed, took an axe, and went in the forest, cut wood, and carried it home on his shoulders, thus mortifying his body, and easing the work of his servants. In traveling from one place to the other he went in a plain conveyance, reading at the same time some religious work.

After Hungary had been entirely converted, and the blessed King Stephen himself had been received into heaven on the assumption of the Blessed Virgin Peter succeeded him, to whom all the princes of Hungary swore allegiance except one, who dethroned the king, took unjust possession of the throne during Lent, put his own advisers to death like wild beasts, and then went to St. Gerard to fulfil his Easter duty just as if nothing had happened. He also desired to be crowned by St. Gerard, but the Saint refused although urged to do so by the most prominent men of the kingdom; other Bishops, however, consented, and when the king entered the church accompanied by the clergy and people, the blessed Bishop Gerard, filled with the Holy Ghost, ascended the pulpit, and fearlessly addressed the king in the following manner: "Lent is instituted for sinners that they may obtain forgiveness, and for the just in order to increase their merits; but as you, O king, have stained the holy season with bloodshed, you deserve no pardon of your sins to-day, and since I am ready to die for Christ even this moment, I will announce to you what the future has in store for you. After three years the sword of vengeance shall descend upon you, and your kingdom as well as your life shall be taken from you." The friends of the king were terrified, and made signs to the interpreter not to tell the king what had been said, but Gerard exclaimed: "Fear God, honor the king, and speak to him in his language." The interpreter did as commanded, and told the king what the holy Bishop had said.

The prediction of St. Gerard was fulfilled, by which was shown that the ser-

vant of God had the gift of prophecy. A terrible revolution sprung up during which the usurper Abbas lost his life. Another king was now chosen by the name of Andrew, upon the infamous condition that he would uproot Christianity in Hungary. The Saint went to the residence of the king in order to prevent him from keeping his horrible promise, but his visit was fruitless, and dining together the same day with other Bishops and priests, he suddenly said: "Brethren and friends, to-morrow we shall be called to the feast of the Lamb; let us hasten without remonstrance, let us die for Christ!"

The next morning Gerard said Mass very early, and gave Communion to many who had remained faithful, and then he awaited martyrdom. When near the river Danube, the chariot in which he sat was surrounded by a great crowd who threw stones at him; but, protected by the Lord, he was not hurt, and gave them his blessing. They then stopped the horses, dragged him out of the carriage, and beat him with stones in order to put him to death, and the martyr of Hungary, like St. Stephen, falling on his knees, cried out with a loud voice, saying: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" And when he had said this, he was pierced by a lance, and fell asleep in the Lord. On the same day the Christians met with a terrible defeat, two Bishops and many pious persons being put to death whose name and number is known to God alone.

The body of the Saint, lying on the ground, was not further insulted; the next day Catholics buried him in a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin; afterwards his body was deposited in his own cathedral of which he was Bishop. Later his body was transferred to Venice where it is still venerated in the church of the Blessed Virgin.

ST. ERMENFRID.

(September 25.)

"Reward of Purity."

THERE once lived a wealthy nobleman, named Ermenric, whose wife was Valdalena; they had two sons, Valdalenus and Ermenfrid, who became pages at the court of King Clotaire in Burgundy. The king afterwards confided his seal to Valdalenus, and made him chancellor of the kingdom; Ermenfrid pleased God and all good men by his holy life, and his piety became soon known to the whole court. He was pleasant in his conversation, well versed in science, and

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greatly beloved by all who knew him; he always spoke the truth; no one who conversed with him, if but for a little while, left him unedified.

At that time a terrible plague carried off in two weeks all the sisters of a neighboring convent, and as the Abbess and foundress of the convent had been a near relative of the two brothers, they would not permit the estate to fall into the possession of the city of Besançon. Ermenfrid who intended to leave the world, and follow Christ, found that the convent would exactly suit his purpose; he in company with his brother returned to the royal palace, asked permission to become a monk which the king most cheerfully granted, returned then to the convent, and there made the necessary repairs and changes. After having finished this work, he went to blessed Valdebert, Abbot of Luxeu, was made acquainted with the rules and regulations of the order, and received as a novice. Having afterwards been ordained priest, he returned with the blessing of Valdebert to his monastery, leaving the world entirely. He divided his goods among the poor, reserving a part for the adornment of the church, and many others followed him, left the world, and served God.

Thus a large community sprung into existence, animated by ONE heart and ONE soul, living under the kind direction of Father Ermenfrid, in the fear of the Lord. His brother, however, Valdalenus, who remained in the world, and attended to the temporal affairs of the monastery, was assailed by temptations of the flesh, and was on the point of yielding, when the Almighty revealed his intention to blessed Ermenfrid, who at once went to see his brother, brought him to the monastery, and persuaded him to preserve his purity. Ermenfrid endeavored to keep his brother from committing the least sin, so that both might be united in heaven where they doubtless are now in reward for the pure and chaste life which they led when on earth. They loved one another so truly that they never used the least offensive word, but were perfectly content and happy in the society of each other.

When at home with their mother, it one Sunday happened that from the servant not being able to find the horses, they could not attend Mass. Ermenfrid went into the garden to pray, and so did his brother, when suddenly Ermenfrid heard the chant of Angels, as if celebrating Mass. Calling his brother, he asked him if he heard nothing, and when he answered: "No," Ermenfrid said: "Come, and touch me," when at once Valdalenus also heard the heavenly song. Both then fell upon the ground, thanking God for having bestowed such grace upon his servants.

In the holy Scriptures, continency is compared with the life of Angels; for this reason Ermenfrid was favored even in this life by hearing the song of Angels, and Valdalenus, preserved by the endeavors of his brother in holy purity, also heard the singing of the Angels by touching his brother. St. Ermenfrid daily increased in holiness, and directed his brethren in the service of the eternal King; he rejoiced with those who rejoiced, and wept with those who wept.

(Rom. 12 : 15.) The monks under his guidance, animated by his example, led a holy life. They loved one another, and envy and repining were not known among them. On Sundays and festivals, as he distributed at Mass blessed bread, if he came to a poor mechanic, whose hands showed signs of hard work, he would first kiss his hands, and then offer him the bread.

St. Ermenfrid, feeling the approach of death, invited the brethren to see him for the last time. After sunset he gave up his blessed spirit, and not only the monks, but also those who were near the abbey, saw a shining light in which the pure soul of the Saint ascended into heaven. The monks buried him with great solemnity in the church of St. John the Baptist, by the grave of his brother, who had preceded him into eternity.

ST. NILUS.

(September 26.)

"Trial of the Spirit."

At Rossanna in Calabria there lived a boy, who possessed such extraordinary talents, that his teachers were astonished at his progress; he read nothing with as much pleasure, as he did the lives of the Fathers of the desert. He lost his parents, when very young, and was brought up in the house of a married sister; he was consequently deprived of a firm and steady guidance. Thus the youth grew up, left, as it were, to himself; his beauty, his splendid voice, his talents excited admiration, and at length a handsome girl of humble condition persuaded him to marry her. The grace of God, however, the thought of death and the punishment of sin were continually before him. After his wife died, he renounced the world, and although sick, set out for a monastery: while crossing a river, he was at once freed from the fever, from which he was suffering.

At the Monastery of St. John in Rossana he received the habit, but with the permission of his Superiors he retired to a neighboring cave, where in the practise of the greatest austerity he served God, sleeping only one hour in the night, devoting the rest to prayer. When St. John, the Abbot of St. Mercury, was told, that Nilus would not eat bread, nor drink wine, he sent for him, placed a cup filled with wine before him, and commanded him to drink it, for the Abbot wished to try, whether Nilus walked on the road of perfection. Nilus asked the Abbot's blessing, and drank the wine; for, although he never touched

wine, he would not prefer his opinion to that of the Abbot, and thus submitted entirely to the will of his superior, who admired his obedience.

The prudent Abbot had chosen the right means of trying, whether Nilus possessed the true spirit of piety and humility. True piety does not only consist in mortifying our body; for sometimes, self-will or spiritual pride are concealed therein; as the body must obey the spirit, so also should the spirit obey God, and this is best shown by willingly and humbly obeying our superiors. If, therefore, a pious person is self-willed, and does not obey his spiritual director, parent or master in things not unlawful, it is a sure sign, that his piety is false and without merit; for humility and obedience are wanting.

After the death of the Archbishop of Rossana, the clergy all resolved to choose St. Nilus; but he retired until a Bishop was elected.

St. Nilus, whose fame for sanctity was daily increasing, left his seclusion, and went to the Abbey of Monte Cassino, where the monks were very anxious to be instructed by such a holy man. They asked him, in what the vocation of a monk consisted and how he could find mercy. Nilus said: "The monk is an Angel, his mission is mercy, peace and the offering of praise; for as the Angels, without intermission praise God, enjoy peace among themselves, and in mercy assist man, in the same manner should the true monk show mercy to others, love the stranger, not envy those who are more perfect, and be sincere in faith and hope in God; but whoever does the contrary, is the house of all evil. As soon as any one becomes a monk, he will be either an Angel or a devil." One of the monks then asked him: "If the Abbot commands me to do a thing, which would be injurious to me, must I obey?" Nilus answered him in the words of the Apostle: "Obey your prelates, and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls." (Hebr. 13, 17.)

St. Nilus had a disciple whom he loved more than the others, but whom he treated very severely, because he found in him the capability of attaining the highest degree of humility, obedience and patience. His name was Stephen, and he was naturally very awkward and slow. As he fell asleep easily, Nilus had a stool made for him with but one leg, so that he had to be watchful not to lose his balance and fall. The Saint made use of this pious youth to correct others, who were disobedient. If any one talked while he was expounding the scriptures, he said: "It is certainly no one but Stephen talking; turn him out, that he may not give you a bad example." Sometimes Nilus sent him away from the table reproaching him for eating too hastily or immoderately, and by so doing he only wished to reproach and correct others. St. Nilus treated Stephen, as Almighty God does the elect, by sending them more adversity and troubles than He does others.

When Stephen was on his death-bed, the monks assembled around him, and Nilus said: "Brother Stephen, as you will soon die, bless your brethren." The dying man rose, and gave them his blessing. Nilus then again said: "Rest

now, for you are weak," and Stephen, falling back upon his bed, died, as he had lived, in obedience. St. Nilus, lamenting, said: "O, dear Stephen, we are now separated; you enter upon a well deserved quiet, but I remain here in punishment; you were a soldier and a martyr, and I have been your tormentor." He then commanded the monks to prepare a double grave, for after his death he desired to be buried at the side of the blessed brother.

St. Nilus treated himself, as he had his disciple and friend, and he wished to die rather, than to be honored by others, and he, therefore, purposely endeavored to make people regard him as an ill-tempered and wicked man; but as vain men, who seek honor and respect, generally reap dishonor and contempt, so did the respect and fame of St. Nilus increase, the more he sought to escape the praise of the world. Even cruel tyrants revered him, and the Emperor Otho III, and the Pope, venerated no living man as they did Nilus.

Although leading an austere life, he reached the age of 95, and when dying his last words were those of the Prophet: "Then shall I not be confounded, when I look into all thy commandments." (Ps. 118, 6.)

ST. ELZEAR.

(September 27.)

"Order at Home."

In the year 1286, when the Princess Sandana of Sabran gave birth to a son, she took him in her arms and said: "O Lord, by whose command life is given to all creatures, I thank Thee for having given me this son; accept him as Thy servant, pour out upon him the grace of Thy blessing; if, however, Thou shouldst foresee, that he would resist Thy will, take him immediately after his baptism from this world, it is better, for him to live with Thee, than in this life offend Thy infinite Majesty." The Almighty accepted this offering; for even in his childhood marks of holiness were visible in him. He was kind to the poor, agreeable and friendly to all, meek and modest, and it could be said of him, as was said of the infant Jesus: "And he advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and man." (Luke 2: 52.) This was due in no slight degree to Gassendis, a very pious and virtuous relative, who, after the death of his mother, took upon herself the education of the child. Elzear had hardly reached the age of manhood, when Charles II, King of Sicily, induced him to

marry Delphine, a very holy maiden of princely descent. At the time of her marriage she was only fifteen years old, and could hardly be persuaded by her relatives to marry, as she desired to lead a life of chastity; she finally, however, obtained her wish, for Elzear consented, to live with her in continency, and they kept their vow for twenty five years, so that both died in the state of virginity. Elzear would have preferred to renounce all temporal goods, and serve God in seclusion; but as in this affair he fervently prayed, that Almighty God would show him, what course of life he should follow, it was revealed to him, that he should not outwardly change his state of life; and he lived in the world so piously, that he is to be admired more, than if he had lived in seclusion among pious monks. He spent the greater part of the night, and sometimes the whole night, in prayer and meditation; he lived with his wife in spiritual love; they edified one another and advanced in Christian perfection; Delphine also was after her death beatified.

Having lived for some time in the castle of his grand-father, Elzear retired with his wife to his own estate, where he was his own master, and made rules and regulations for his servants, which, perhaps, would not be practicable every where; they show, however, in what spirit masters should conduct the affairs of their house. The rules were as follows:

1. All the servants must daily attend the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

2. Every servant must lead a virtuous life; any one found guilty of impurity, shall leave the house at once; I do not wish to eat bread with those who deliberately commit mortal sin, nor shall I permit them to contaminate others.

3. All, without exception, must receive holy communion once a month.

4. The female servants shall spend their time in prayer, good works and manual labor.

5. Every servant shall avoid cursing, blaspheming and indecent words, for the holy scriptures say: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." (Prov. 18: 21.) Whoever violates this rule, shall during the meals sit on the floor, receiving nothing but bread and water.

6. All games of hazard are forbidden in my house under heavy penalties. On festivals I will permit recreation and pleasures, but not such as may give scandal or cause quarrels.

7. All my servants shall live in peace and harmony, and no one shall offend another either by word or deed; whoever has quarrelled, shall at once be reconciled to his opponent, for the holy scriptures command, that we should not allow the sun to go down upon our anger. (Eph. 4: 27.)

8. Every evening all those who are not prevented shall attend the religious instructions, which I will give.

These admonitions given by St. Elzear to his subjects, produced a great effect, because they proceeded from a heart overflowing with the love of God. In his castle, therefore, was to be found as much love, order, piety,

modesty, peace, kindness, and charity, as if it had been the best regulated monastery; far and near it became known, what order St. Elzear had introduced into his house, and many commenced to adopt the same rules, among whom was also a Bishop, who lived in the neighborhood.

If, however, Elzear insisted upon his servants leading Christian lives, he required of himself a great deal more. Like the priests, he said the breviary daily; besides the fasts ordained by the Church, he imposed upon himself many other penances; under his clothes he wore a penitential girdle, and he often said the Miserere, scourging himself after every third verse in honor of the passion of Christ; on all the Sundays of Advent or Lent, as also on festivals, he received holy communion with the greatest devotion. His spirit was constantly united and absorbed in God, so that while eating, conversing, or hearing music he was filled with pious thoughts. His principal endeavor was: 1. to avoid every sin as he would the fire of hell; 2. to offer up to God the love of his heart; 3. to conceal his good works and the divine graces he received from the world. Every day he entertained twelve poor persons at his table; always gave to the poor, and would even secretly inquire after their wants; among the sick he especially visited the lepers; dressed their sores and even kissed them.

After the death of his father, Elzear succeeded to the countship of Ariano; but the inhabitants were incited against him, and refused to obey. The Prince of Taranto, his cousin, proposed to him, that he should hang some of the ringleaders, and the others would then submit; but Elzear, when tempted by hatred or impatience, would direct his thoughts to the crucified, and he would say: "Can I compare my sufferings with those of my Saviour?" He, therefore, declined the offer, saying, that he would win the good will of the people by kindness, rather than by hanging. The people finally listened to reason, and honored the count as a father.

If in his dominion any one was condemned to death, he went himself to see him, exhorting him to be converted and save his soul. He would remit either the whole fine or part of it, if they were poor, and in the same manner he would secretly give back to the families of those who were condemned to death, the estates that had been lawfully confiscated.

Robert, King of Naples, desired to give a good education to his son Charles, the crown prince; he, therefore, confided him to Count Elzear, who found many bad habits in his pupil; but he won his heart, so that the young prince begged his master, the Count, to teach and correct him. Elzear especially impressed upon his mind the truth, that piety would protect him against the flatterers of the world, against pride and all the other passions; he advised him, to receive holy communion frequently, to be kind to the poor, and that when angry to say nothing, for the tongue had ruined many princes.

When people saw, that Elzear had great influence at the court, they showed him every honor; some who wished to obtain favors from the king,

offered presents to Elzear, hoping to see their wishes the sooner fulfilled; but Elzear refused them all.

The count was afterwards sent as ambassador to Paris, where he fell dangerously ill. His first act was to make a general confession, and then he had Mass daily offered up in his room. He never ceased to praise God and to express his confidence in the merits of Jesus Christ. His blessed end and the surprising beauty and serenity of his face after death made such an impression upon one of the servants who had led a wicked life, that, seized by sorrow and repentance, he sent for a priest, to whom he made his confession. Thus did this servant obtain conversion and the salvation of his soul, through the death of him, who, when living, was so anxious for the salvation of his servants.

ST. LIOBA.

(September 28.)

"Calumny."

It is related that a great scandal once arose at Bischofsheim on the Tauber. A woman crossing the creek early one morning, found the body of a child wrapped up in linen. Not long before a convent had been erected in that place, and the Tauber ran through the convent yard. The woman without further consideration proceeded to the city, crying out loudly: "These nuns are excellent women, a chaste company; they baptize their children themselves. Citizens, we should investigate, and see if one of the nuns is not missing, who has committed this heinous crime." The Abbess hearing of the report and the horrible speeches made on the subject, assembled the sisters, and told them what had been said. One of the sisters, however, named Agatha, was absent; she had gone home on some family business. She was at once recalled, because the convent could not permit such a calumny to be spread about in reference to one of its members. When Agatha returned, and heard the charge make against her, she said: "Almighty God, who knowest all things, and before whom nothing is concealed, who protected Susanna against false accusations, show Thy mercy to our convent, and permit not that it shall be stained by such calumny; I beseech Thee in praise and honor of Thy great name to reveal the perpetrator of the crime!"

The Abbess, convinced of the innocence of sister Agatha, commanded all to go to the church, and recite the rosary with extended arms; they held procession three times a day around the convent, during which the litany was said.

When in the afternoon they were ready for the third procession, and many people out of curiosity had assembled, the Abbess stood before the altar, and with hands uplifted towards heaven, amid sighing and weeping, she prayed with a loud voice: "O Lord Jesus Christ, King of Virgins, lover of innocence, invincible God! show Thy might, and save us from the ignominy; for the insults of Thy enemies have fallen upon us," when suddenly a woman cried out, and publicly confessed before all that she was the unnatural mother who had committed the deed. The sisters shed tears of joy, because their innocence had been shown, and the people in astonishment praised the power of the Saviour, and the piety of the Abbess. The murderess was a crippled beggar-girl who had daily received alms and food from the sisters.

As the woman did who found the dead body of the child, so also do thousands by being always ready to suspect others, and scatter their heartless suspicions about as if they were really true. Many zealously make use of the most insignificant act to believe, and spread the very worst report concerning good priests and pious persons; the world rejoices if it can slander them. Why is this? Because worldlings and sinners feel reproved by every decided act of religion, and, therefore, hate and deny it, and call it hypocrisy. Thus they easily show how the kingdom of Satan reigns in their heart, for, like Satan, they hate and persecute Christianity, and rejoice at every opportunity to insult and destroy it.

It has been so at all times, and what we have related of Bischofsheim, happened more than thousand years ago. The Abbess, who with the other sisters had been insulted by the shameful calumny, was St. Lioba, a relative of St. Boniface; she received her education at the convent of Winbrun, England, and was distingaished for unusual gifts of mind, and for the sanctity of her life.

St. Boniface (see the fifth of June) had sent messengers and letters to England, in which he invited good men and pious women to assist him in spreading Christianity in Germany. He especially desired of St. Tetta, Abbess of Winburn, to send him Lioba, for whom he had founded a convent at Bischofsheim, where soon a number of virgins were assembled to lead a holy life under the direction of St. Lioba, who possessed great virtue and a powerful mind. She endeavored to appear irreproachable before God and her religious, and was, therefore, very cautious not to teach anything which she did not do herself.

The same people who had formerly so readily believed the most horrible calumnies against the convent, afterwards took refuge within its walls, for a most terrible storm arose, so that the firmament became dark, and the fearful thunder and lightning seemed to announce the end of the world. Lioba threw herself praying before the altar, but the storm continued to rage with great fury, when the people, filled with dismay, urged St. Lioba to help them. The Saint rose, laid aside her veil, had the door of the church opened, stood upon the threshold, and made the sign of the cross, invoking at the same time the name of the

Blessed Trinity; she then extended her hands, and called upon the kindness of Jesus through the intercession and merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary, when at once the storm and thunder ceased, the dark clouds disappeared, and the sun burst forth most brilliantly. In the same manner were the inhabitants of Bischofsheim saved from a terrible fire through the prayers of St. Lioba. Thus Almighty God frequently ordains it that those who have thrown suspicion and slanders upon pious persons, are often compelled to seek assistance from them.

When St. Boniface entered upon his last mission to Friseland, where he suffered martyrdom, he invited Lioba to see him, and he exhorted her not to leave Germany, but to continue her former endeavors, which she did, and the fame of her sanctity and wisdom spread all over the land: even the emperor Charles the Great esteemed and venerated her; he invited her several times to visit the imperial court, and made her costly presents; the empress also entertained such an affection for the saintly Abbess that she wished to be always in her company in order to be edified by her words and example; but Lioba could not be induced to change her convent-life for that of a court. Having arranged everything in the best order, she retired to the convent of Schonersheim, above Mayence, where she prepared herself for death, which event soon followed. Her body was carried to Fulda, and is buried in the same church where the relics of St. Boniface are venerated.

ST. JOHN OF MONTMIREUIL.

(September 29.)

"Signs of Repentance."

THIS Saint was a French knight of a very war-like nature, but possessed a most liberal disposition. Once when crowned as victor he was returning from a tournament, a very pious priest met him, and said frankly: "What good has this tournament been to you? After all your expense, labors, and sufferings you have won nothing but a little transient glory." This priest knew the knight very well, and exhorted him on many other occasions. Finally the sun of grace shone upon the good seed sown in his heart; the knight laid aside his martial pride, and determined to fight only for God. He first erected near his castle Montmireuil a hospital for poor strangers and the sick; he himself attended them, and at their death assisted in carrying the bier. He daily entertained the poor at his table, and even forced them to sleep in his own bed, while he

himself lay on the floor. Once when riding out, he met a leper sitting on a miserable horse who asked an alms; John having no money, alighted from his horse, took the leper's horse, and rode home. Although laughed at by the boys in the street, he humbly and quietly suffered their mockery. In like manner he sometimes would give the clothes he wore if he had nothing else with him to bestow.

One day some knights who were related to him, met him, and reproached him with disgracing his whole family, of which he was the head; but the holy man replied: "If I only obtain Jesus Christ, I shall be happy." On another occasion, when riding with his suite, he passed by a statue of the Blessed Virgin without saluting her, as he had been distracted in his thoughts; as soon, however, as he remembered his neglect, he alighted from his horse, went back, fell upon his knees, and asked her pardon.

John was resolved to give up all worldly affairs, and to live for God alone; he first wished to lead a life of perfect seclusion, but a pious hermit dissuaded him from taking such a step. He then directed himself to some of the most prudent and learned priests, opened his heart to them, and asked them to tell him in what state of life he could most easily save his soul. It was the unanimous opinion of all that he should enter the Cistercian order, and John without delay resolved to act accordingly. As there were two convents of that order on his own domains, he applied to the abbey of Longpont. The Abbot reminded the knight of the austerities he would have to practice, such as fasting, working, and prayer, to all of which he would have to submit as a member of the order, and he asked him, if brought up as he had been, he could eat the coarse food of the monastery. The humble knight replied: "I never rejoiced so much in the world as when I was deemed worthy to eat common bread." When he received the habit, he showed that he was in earnest about what he had said; for he put water on the cooked vegetables in order to destroy his sensual appetite, and he fasted so severely that the Abbot had to restrict his fasts.

Once when in company with some other monks, they passed by some laborers who mocked at them; John's companions ran away, but he was happy to be insulted for Christ's sake. He turned to the men who mocked at him, and fervently asked them to insult the miserable John Montmireuil even more, because he was a sinner worthy of contempt and insults.

There was a monk in the same house who had once belonged to the service of John. Out of gratitude, Brother Amandus every night took his former master's shoes, and cleaned them. John, dissatisfied with such treatment, since he had come to the convent not to be served, but to serve, complained of it to the Prior, who gave him the following advice: "To-night, when Brother Amandus is asleep, go to his room, take his shoes, and clean them." John rejoiced at this instruction, and did so.

Before entering the monastery, John had presented a house to one of his re-

latives, who afterwards also became a monk, giving the house to the abbey; but his son resisted, and would not allow the monks to make the necessary alterations, although John, the former owner, assisted himself in making the repairs, and when he afterwards, in company with his Prior, went there to remain over night, the servants of the young man who occupied the house, would not permit them to stay. The Prior then with the following words of the Gospel consoled John: "He came into his own, and his own received him not." John who rejoiced in suffering with our Saviour, left the place, and found shelter among strangers.

John on account of his humility was called *humble John;* if as a proud knight he had continued to give alms only, made pilgrimages, and mortified his body, all this would not have been as sure a sign of conversion as was the humiliations which he himself sought. If you wish to know whether you possess true repentance, ask above all things whether you are humble of heart, for humility reconciles the sinner with God, for God loves converted sinners more than those who have not committed grievous sins, but who have no humility.

On the Vigil of St. Michael in the year 1217, the Prior had a dream in which it appeared to him as if all the monks chanted psalms in the choir, holding a candle in their hand, among which he saw one candle higher and brighter than the others; this one candle, however, ascended higher and higher until it disappeared. The Prior was saddened, because the bright light was gone, and the choir appeared very dark. When awake, he asked himself what signification this vision would have, but he was unable to answer the question. The next day Brother John of Montmireuil died.

ST. JEROME.

(September 30.)

"Learning."

This celebrated Father of the Church was the son of wealthy parents, who sent him to Rome to study. Although he made rapid progress in knowledge, he became very lax in the practice of religion. In the beginning he was accustomed on Sundays to visit the tombs of the Apostles and Martyrs, but afterwards he neglected his religious duties, and became more and more worldly-minded; he gave himself up to vanity and pride, and even lost his chastity.

Such is the road upon which many who study ruin their soul; the mere fact of being learned does not make a person good any more than does the possession

of riches; on the contrary, the Apostle says: "Knowledge puffeth up." (1 Cor. 8 : 1.)

In order to perfect himself, Jerome went on long journeys, and came to the city of Treves, where he was converted; he renounced the vanities of the world, and resolved to serve God in seclusion. He first resolved to be baptized, for it was at that time (in the fourth century) frequently the case that even persons who had the faith, delayed being baptized, thinking that they would be in less danger of losing the grace of baptism by mortal sin.

Jerome, after having visited the most distinguished fathers of the deserts of Egypt, retired to Chalcis, where in solitude he lived a penitential life; but notwithstanding his severe fastings, watchings, and constant prayers, he was beset by horrible temptations; for if man is truly converted, he may expect for a long time to combat temptations.

He writes concerning himself: "It often appeared to me in this desert, dried up by the sun, as if I was in the midst of the greatest enjoyments in Rome; my body was covered with the sack-cloth of penance, my skin was as though it had been burned, I wept and sighed incessantly, grief consumed me; out of fear of hell I had banished myself to live among scorpions and wild beasts,—and yet I often feel myself carried away in spirit to places of amusement. My face was pale from fasting, and still impure desires inflamed my cold body. My flesh was almost dead, and my concupiscence a burning fire. Weeping I threw myself at the feet of Jesus; I endeavored to restrain my rebellious flesh by eating nothing for whole weeks. I wept day and night, and struck my breast until the Almighty commanded the storm, and restored quiet to my soul. Whenever I saw a dark valley or a high rock, I selected it for prayer, and for the prison of my wretched body; but God is my witness that when, after shedding many tears, I lifted up my eyes to heaven, I thought that I was amid the choirs of the Angels, and joyfully and enraptured I commenced to sing praises to the Lord."

St. Jerome not only fasted in order to destroy within himself his passions and the flames of unchaste desires, but he also determined to overcome the difficulties of acquiring the Hebrew language. He relates himself how often he despaired of success, and how he again and again commenced the study. Formerly he had applied himself more to the study of pagan authors than was becoming in a Christian, when by a dream he was warned not to do so, from which time he devoted himself to the study of the holy Scriptures, and his knowledge served much in furthering the Christian religion. Learning is valuable before God when we do not seek to acquire it out of vanity, but only to become useful to the world.

St. Jerome, after having spent four years in the desert, returned to Antioch, where the Patriarch ordained him priest, but he made it a condition that he should not be obliged to accept an office. He then visited the holy places in

Palestine, where he became more and better acquainted with the Hebrew language, and in order to perfect himself in the knowledge of the holy Scriptures, he went to Constantinople to see the distinguished St. Gregory of Nazianzen. At the same time (381) Pope Damasus invited him to Rome where a council was held. There he was most solemnly received; the Pope read the holy Scriptures with him, and heard his explanations, and other ecclesiastics of Rome profited by attending his lectures.

The Pope commissioned him to make a correct translation of the New Testament into Latin, which is the same now read in the Epistles and Gospels of the Mass; besides he wrote many other works on various subjects of the Christian faith and life.

A man so distinguished for learning could not escape the attacks of the envious and wicked, especially after the death of his friend Pope Damasus; he in a letter to some of them says: "You speak as if I were covered with disgrace, as if I were a crafty and dangerous man, a man who was not truthful, deceiving and seducing others by magic. Not to believe such abominations of even guilty persons would be safer than to invent and believe them of the innocent. There are many who have kissed my hand, and who slandered me with the kiss still warm upon their viper mouth; words of pity fell from their lips, while mischievous joy filled their heart. We all shall one day appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and there it shall be revealed how every one has lived."

As there was nothing to detain him in Rome, he resolved to return to the Holy Land, and made Bethlehem his residence. He lived in a small cell, was poorly dressed, ate only bread and herbs, and was constantly occupied in prayer, expounding the holy Scriptures, and writing religious works. In that time the Christians of and around Bethlehem led very pious lives; in a letter, written at Bethlehem, he says: "The village of Jesus Christ is very secluded, the deep silence is only interrupted by the chanting of psalms. Wherever you go, the peasant sings Allelujah while guiding the plough. The reapers, covered with sweat, rest by singing the praises of the Lord; the vine-dresser cuts the vine, and sings the Psalms of David."

St. Jerome clearly perceived that besides requiring sanctity, it was also his special calling to further the welfare of the Christian Church by the help of his learning. He, therefore, translated all the books of the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Latin, and his version of the Bible, the Vulgate, has been declared and received by the Church as the only correct and safe translation. The following works were written by St. Jerome while in Bethlehem: Two books against Jovinian, in which the Saint shows the merits and beauties of constant virginity. One book on the duties of the priest, in which he especially recommends disinterestedness, chastity, zeal in studying the holy Scriptures, simplicity in sermons, and obedience to the Bishop. One book against Vigilantius, who had written against the veneration of the Saints and their relics. St.

Jerome justifies the doctrine of the Catholic Church by saying that it was pleasing to God for us to venerate the Saints and their relics, that the Saints as crowned victors in heaven, can pray the more for us than they did when living upon earth, and that the power of the martyrs by the many miracles performed on their graves, became known even to the heathen. The book of dialogues against the Pelagians, in which he refuted the heresy that man even without the grace of God can by his own free will live virtuously, and be saved.

Besides these works, this learned Father of the Church wrote complete commentaries upon portions of the holy Scriptures, and many epistles in which he fully explained the various Christian truths. In knowledge of the holy Scriptures, St. Jerome is considered the most learned of the Fathers of the Church, because none of the others understood so many languages, or was so well acquainted with the holy place as was he.

It often happens that special tribulations befall man immediately before death; so it was with St. Jerome, who lost by death his best friends, and at the same time the news reached him that Rome had fallen into the hands of the Goths, and had been almost entirely destroyed, that Italy would be devastated, and that all his friends there had died. Many refugees now came to the Holy Land, for after the devastations of the Goths, a terrible famine broke out; whole families left unhappy Italy without provisions or money; persons who had been rich were in utter destitution. On seeing so many unfortunate persons St. Jerome could not refrain from weeping. He exerted himself to feed, console, and shelter them. With this trouble came another; for the Pelagians sent wicked men to Bethlehem who robbed and burned a monastery, and ill-treated the Catholics. St. Jerome himself saved his life by seeking refuge in a castle.

At this time, St. Jerome wrote to St. Augustine, who by his writings and efforts opposed the dangerous heresy of the Pelagians. We will make an extract from the letter, because it is an evidence that envy and jealousy exercised no power over St. Jerome: "I have always respected and venerated you, and loved the Saviour and Lord dwelling in your heart; but now I esteem you even more if that could be possible, so that I cannot allow an hour to pass without speaking of you, who have persevered in the fervor of faith against winds and storms. Happy Augustine, for you are honored throughout the whole world! The Catholics honor and praise you as the restorer of the old faith, and the greatest honor is that all heretics hate you; they persecute me also with equal hatred, and if they cannot put us to death by the sword, they wish us all manner of evil in their heart. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ have you in its holy keeping, and preserve me in your memory, venerable and happy Bishop!"

Advanced in age, weakened by works of penance and hardships, St. Jerome died, and was buried in Bethlehem; he was destined to live and die near the

holy sepulchre of our Lord, and after his death his body was to enjoy the same privilege; his body was, however, later transferred to Rome, and is deposited now in the church of St. Mary del Presepio, where the crib is preserved in which our Saviour was laid after his birth.

If unlearned persons have read the life of this holy Father, they may, perhaps, ask as a monk once inquired of St. Bonaventure: "God has given many graces to you that are learned, what shall we poor unlearned men do?" St. Bonaventure replied: "An unlearned and simple man can love God as much, and even more, than a learned one; for love is the principal thing."

THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

PENTECOST-CYCLE CONTINUED.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 118.

"THOU art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right. Deal with thy servant according to thy mercy. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." Glory be to the Father.

These words are taken from the beautiful and significant Psalm 118. In them the royal Prophet proposes the most sublime rules of life, and especially exhorts to the love and veneration of the divine law. At the Introit of the Mass, the Church, in the words of David, praises the justice of God, and encourages the faithful in accordance with her instruction given on previous Sundays, to a strict observance of the divine precepts, styling those Blessed who walk undefiled and just in the law of the Lord.

PRAYER.

Grant to Thy people, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to avoid the contagion of the devil, and with a pure mind to seek Thee, the only God. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Eph. 4 : 1–6.

"Brethren: As a prisoner in the Lord, I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called, with all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity, careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one Spirit: as you are called in one

hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all, who is blessed for ever and ever. Amen."

This Epistle is intimately connected with last Sunday's. St. Paul, imprisoned at Rome for the faith, continues in this part of his Epistle to encourage the faithful to a fervent love for one another, especially to unity in the Spirit, to mutual humility, forbearance, and patience, and reminds them that they are members of one body, called to one hope, sanctified in baptism, united in one faith, and servants of one God and Father of all men.

The holy Pope Leo makes the following beautiful remarks on the admonition of the Apostle, to walk worthy of the vocation to which we are called; he says: "Know, O Christians, your sublime rank, and be careful, after having become partakers of the divine nature, not to fall back into the misery of your first origin by conducting yourself in a manner unworthy of your regeneration."

By the few but significant words of the Apostle: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," is clearly and definitely expressed the necessity incumbent on all the faithful to accept the truths of the Catholic religion, and at the same time reject every deviation from the one faith of the Church. There is but one truth, and this one truth exists in the one Church instituted by Christ. He, therefore, who through his own fault does not belong to the one body of Christ, cannot be considered as a true servant of the one Lord and God.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 22 : 35–46.

"At that time, the Pharisees came nigh to Jesus: and one of them, a doctor of the law, asked him, tempting him: Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets. And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying: What think you of Christ? Whose son is he? They say to him: David's. He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying: 'The Lord said to my Lord: Sit on my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool?' If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word: neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."

The Gospel not only proposes to us the great commandment of love (towards God and our neighbor), but also the most sublime dogma of the divinity of Christ, those two points, on which rest religious and moral life. The question, proposed to Christ by a doctor of the law, who sought to tempt him: "Master,

which is the great commandment in the law?" was at that time a point of controversy among the Jews, because the Jewish doctors of the law disagreed as to which was the greatest commandment. Our Saviour, however, by his unexpected answer that LOVE was the greatest commandment, teaches us not to debate on the greater or lesser meaning of every single commandment, but rather to consider them as forming parts of the one great commandment of love towards God, in which is comprised the obligation of performing good works. When our Saviour derives the second commandment—the love towards our neighbor—from the first, and declares it to be like to the first, we must understand by it that this second commandment is an essential part, and a natural consequence of the first, and, therefore, is as necessary as the first, since St. John also expressly declares that we cannot love God unless we love our neighbor. (1 John 3 : 10.)

On these two great commandments, the love of God and our neighbor, as proposed by our Saviour, St. Chrysostom says: "Why is the second commandment like the first? Because the first gives birth to the second, and in return the second confirms the first; '*for*,' says the Lord, '*every one that doth evil, hateth the light, and cometh not to the light.*' (John 3 : 20.) And again it is written: '*The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God;*' and further: '*They are corrupt*, and are become abominable in their ways.' (Ps. 13 : 1.) It is further written: 'The desire of money is the root of all evils which some coveting have erred from the faith.' (1 Tim. 6 : 10.) And thus said the Lord: 'If you love me, keep my commandments,' (John 14 : 15) the head and root of which is: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbor as thyself.' If to love God means also to love our neighbor—for thus the Lord said to Peter: 'If you love me feed my sheep,'—and if the love for our neighbor causes us to observe also the commandments of God, He justly says that on these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets. And as He before, when questioned concerning the resurrection, taught more than was desired by those who tempted Him, so also now, when asked the first commandment, He added, without being asked, the second one, to love thy neighbor as thyself."

The question which our Lord in return put to the pharisees, asking them what they thought of Christ, could not have been understood by them in the true sense nor could they give the right answer to it, because, although they admitted that the promised Messiah was to be a descendant of David, they imagined that He would be a temporal ruler, who would restore the old Jewish kingdom to its temporal splendor and perfection. This false opinion of the pharisees our Saviour refuted in the most striking manner by citing a passage from the Psalms of David, in which that great king who knew no other Lord but God, expressly calls the Messiah HIS LORD, attributing to Him, therefore, the divine nature. Thus our Saviour's words contain, in connection with the Psalms to which He appeals, a clear proof of His divinity.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ecclus. 36 : 18.

"Give peace, O Lord, to them that patiently wait for thee, that thy prophets may be found faithful; hear the prayers of thy servants, and of thy people Israel. I rejoiced at the things that were said to me; we shall go into the house of the Lord." Glory be to the Father.

The Church petitions for peace which the Prophet had foretold as a fruit of redemption through Christ, and expresses her joy at the reception of her children into the Kingdom of God upon earth, established by the Saviour Himself.

PRAYER.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, that the work of Thy mercy may direct our hearts; for without Thy grace we cannot be pleasing to Thee. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—1 Cor. 1 : 4–8.

"Brethren: I give thanks to my God always for you, for the grace of God that is given you in Christ Jesus, that in all things you are made rich in him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace, waiting for the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who also will confirm you unto the end without crime, in the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The thanksgiving of the great Apostle for the calling of the Corinthians to the true faith, should make us also feel grateful to God who has called us also to the blessed communion of His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

St. Chrysostom makes the following appropriate remark: "With great devotion does the Apostle take for himself what is common to all, and makes it his own according to the manner of the Prophet, saying: 'God my God.' (Ps. 63 : 117.) By doing so, he teaches the faithful to imitate him, so that they also may say the same. He who exclaims thus, retires from the pursuit of all temporal things, and directs himself to Him whom he with great feeling calls his own. This can be truly said of him, who elevates himself from the goods of this world to God, who prefers Him always to all other things, and who gives thanks to Him not only for benefits received, but also for those yet to be received."

The Apostle, to encourage the faithful to give thanks to God even with more earnestness, reminds them that all good things, especially spiritual graces, are given by Almighty God through the merits of Jesus Christ.

At the same time the Apostle calls the attention of the faithful to the great

and important truth that no one is without the necessary means of obtaining eternal salvation, that every one with the assistance of God is able to be confirmed in good works, and to avoid sin, so that no one should seek to apologize for indifference, sloth, or sinful life, by giving his weakness and frailty as an excuse, or think that others who lead pure and virtuous lives do so, because they are especially chosen by God, and have received special graces. The good example of others should, on the contrary, encourage us also to be virtuous, since the Lord will most willingly bestow upon us the same graces which He gives to them, and it depends upon us, by an earnest and faithful co-operation with grace, to make ourselves worthy of new and greater ones.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 9 : 1–8.

"At that time: Jesus entering into a boat, passed over the water and came into his own city. And behold they brought to him one sick of the palsy lying in a bed. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold some of the scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say, Arise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the man sick of the palsy), Arise; take up thy bed and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it, feared, and glorified God that gave such power to men."

The city into which Christ came according to the Gospel of to-day, was Capharnaum, on the sea of Genesareth, and called His own city, because our Saviour taught there very often, and there worked many miracles. The sick man brought to Him, was doubly wretched. He was unable to help himself; he lay in a bed, and was, according to St. Mark (2 : 3–4), carried by four men, who, when they could not present him to Christ on account of the multitude, raised the roof and let him down. This poor, wretched, palsied man was sick also IN SOUL; he was in the state of sin, his worst evil, because his sinful life may have caused his bodily affliction and his painful sickness.

Christ, the kind friend of humanity, knowing the miserable condition of the sick man, and seeing the sorrow he had for his sins, received him with His usual kindness and love; He first healed him of the diseases of his soul, by saying: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee;" and then, after having removed the cause of his bodily disease, He cured him also of the palsy, and in a moment his health was restored.

The man sick of palsy is again a type of sinful mankind, redeemed by Christ, and of every sinner. As this sick man lay helpless and wretched, and unable to obtain health and strength, so the sinner lies prostrate, his soul paralyzed by

sin, unable to rise by his own strength from his misery, or to regain the health of his soul. Christ, however, the almighty, the all-kind and merciful helper of man, most graciously receives the sinner at any time, as He did the man sick of palsy, if he is truly sorry for his sins, restoring help and happiness to his soul by the words of the priest in the holy Sacrament of Penance.

The Church draws our attention to the grace of forgiveness being given to all by Christ, and of all being received as friends of God, and at the same time encourages us to give thanks to Him, our Lord and Saviour. The most important instruction, however, given in this Gospel, is that we should always regard SIN as the greatest evil, and as the most terrible of misfortunes, worse than the greatest afflictions of the body, and we should, above all things, endeavor to be cured of this most dangerous disease, that is, if we have committed sin, to obtain pardon by true penance and amendment, and when the greater evil has been removed, we should ask God to avert from us the lesser, the temporal evil, confidently hoping that the Lord may the sooner hear our prayer, and grant our petition.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 77.

"I AM the salvation of the people, saith the Lord; in whatever tribulation they shall cry to me, I will hear them, and I will be their Lord forever. Attend, O, my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth." Glory be to the Father.

In these words of the Psalmist the Church exhorts the faithful to a holy life, according to the commandments of God, reminding them that the Lord will be propitious, will hear their prayer, and assist them in all their tribulation.

PRAYER.

O Almighty and merciful God, graciously defend us from all that is hurtful, that, free in mind and body, we may with ready mind perform all that belongs to Thy service. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—Eph. 4 : 23–28.

"Brethren: Be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, who, according to God, is created in justice, and holiness of truth. Where-

fore, putting away lying, speak ye the truth every man with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. Be angry, and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger. Give not place to the devil. He that stole, let him now steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have something to give to him that suffereth need."

The Epistle of to-day contains an earnest admonition of St. Paul to the faithful to lead a pure and holy life, pleasing to God, by renewing the spirit of their mind, that is, laying aside the old and sinful inclinations, by a new life according to the teachings and example of Christ, and by avoiding new sins and practising virtue.

The OLD man which we have to lay aside, is ADAM, and the NEW MAN which we should put on, CHRIST; that is, we should lay aside our evil inclinations and desires, which by being children of Adam, and by original sin came upon us, and, on the contrary, we should endeavor to become like to the second Adam, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and follow His teachings and example, so that the life of Christ may be revealed in our own life. St. Jerome says: "Put ye on the new man, the Apostle tells us, and in another passage: Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 13 : 14.) He is the new man whom we Christians must put on, with whom we must be clothed; for what was not new in the man whose form our Redeemer assumed? His conception, incarnation, and birth, His childhood, His teaching, His life, His virtues, and, finally, His torments and sufferings, His power shining in them, and His perseverance revealed through them, and then His resurrection and ascension. He was in truth created in justice and holiness, for He is truly God, and the Son of the true God. Whoever, therefore, imitates the life and virtues of Christ, so that he becomes meek as He was, and humble of heart, is willing to give his life for his friends as Christ gave His life for His sheep.—He who, when abused, takes no revenge; who, when reviled, submits in patience, and who overcomes pride by humility—such a one has put on the NEW MAN, and he can justly say with the Apostle: 'I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me!'"

The Apostle then more fully explains how we must lay aside the old man, and put on the new one, and warns us, above all things, against LYING, a sin invented by Satan, and one by which this wily enemy of God and man seduced our first parents to evil, and he further commands us to love truth, a special mark of a good Christian, since our Saviour Himself is truth. St. Paul then continues to warn us against offences towards our neighbor, and exhorts us to charity, a virtue by which our love towards our neighbor is proved.

The Apostle adds: "Let not the sun go down upon your anger," that is, we should lay aside our anger, if we have been surprised into giving way to it before we retire to rest.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 22 : 2-14.

"At that time: Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees in parables, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the marriage. But they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and, having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard of it, he was angry, and, sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city. Then he saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready: but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests: and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."

The Gospel of to-day shows us that this spiritual change consists in not being led away to the bad example of the many who despise the grace of God, but rather in accepting willingly and joyfully the kind invitation of the Lord to his heavenly kingdom, and in adorning our soul as with a wedding garment, so that we may be found worthy to appear at the wedding-feast of the Lord, and to participate in the enjoyment of eternal happiness in His heavenly kingdom.

As our Saviour, on another occasion, compared the kingdom of heaven with a GREAT SUPPER, so He now likens it to a WEDDING-FEAST, prepared by God, the heavenly King, for Him, His only-begotten Son. This parable indicates the intimate and inseparable communion between Christ and His holy Church, and His relation to her who is represented to us by the holy Scriptures as HIS SPOUSE, as also the great happiness of those who as guests of the heavenly bridegroom are received in His Church. In the same sense does St. John in the Apocalypse describe the happiness of the elect in the kingdom of God: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunders, saying: Alleluia: for the Lord our God the omnipotent had reigned. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give glory to him: for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his wife hath prepared herself. And to her it hath been granted, that she should clothe herself with fine linen, glittering and white. For the fine linen are the justification of Saints.

And he saith to me: Write: Blessed are they, who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb." (Apoc. 19: 6–9.)

The Jews were the first who were invited to the wedding-feast of the heavenly King, that is, to the kingdom of God, not only by the Prophets, but by our Saviour Himself, and by the Apostles and other holy men who were sent to preach the Gospel. The Jews, however, too wicked in their hearts, desiring only worldly and not spiritual things, despised the Gospel, and persecuted, abused, and even killed those who proclaimed the word of God, thereby showing themselves unworthy of possessing the kingdom of heaven. As a punishment for their crimes the Lord God delivered them up into the hands of their enemies, the heathen nations, so that their country was invaded, their capital taken and destroyed, they themselves first imprisoned (by the Assyrians and Babylonians), and, finally, subjugated (by the Romans), and scattered over the whole world. After the JEWS had been rejected by Almighty God as unworthy of the kingdom of heaven, the Lord through His messengers invited the GENTILES of all nations to His wedding-feast, and they accepted the invitation more cheerfully than the Jews, and in great numbers entered into the Church, although all did not do so with a good and holy intention, since, according to Christ Himself, there are good and bad in the Church; only the good, however, who are adorned with virtues and rich in good works, who are filled with a truly Christian spirit, especially with true love to God and their neighbor—which, according to the interpretation of the holy Fathers, is denoted by the wedding-garment—are in truth worthy to partake of the marriage-feast of the heavenly King; and they alone, when He comes one day TO SEE HIS GUESTS, that is, to sit in judgment, can stand before Him, and rejoice forever at the heavenly marriage-feast of the lamb. The wicked, however, who are without the wedding-garment of innocence, of virtue, and of charity—and they are numerous, since, as the Saviour adds, *many are called, but few are chosen*—are excluded from the kingdom of heaven, and, as a punishment, are cast into eternal darkness.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Dan. 3.

"ALL that thou hast done to us, O Lord, thou hast done in true judgment, because we have sinned against thee, and we have not obeyed thy commandments; but give glory to thy name, and deal with us according to the multitude of thy mercy. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." Glory be to the Father.

These words were spoken by the three youths when in the fiery furnace; they acknowledged the justice of God, who permitted the Jews, as a punishment for their wickedness, to fall into the hands of the impious King Nabuchodonosor, and to be led into Babylonian captivity; at the same time they expressed even in the midst of the flames their unshaken confidence in their Lord and God, and gave praise to His holy name. The same words the Church repeats to the faithful, exhorting them when in sadness, misfortune, or adversity to preserve their confidence in God, and to be resigned to His holy will, to adore and praise His inscrutable judgments, and to implore Him for help and assistance; the Church then with the royal Prophet calls those blessed who in innocence and holiness faithfully observe the divine commandments, and walk in the narrow path of virtue.

PRAYER.

Be appeased, O Lord, we beseech Thee, and grant to Thy faithful pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their offences, and serve Thee with secure mind. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—Eph. 5 : 15–21.

"See, brethren, how you walk circumspectly: not as unwise, but as wise: redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore become not unwise, but understanding what is the will of God. And be not drunk with wine wherein is luxury, but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit. Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord: giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father: being subject of one to another in the fear of Christ.

The Church exhorts us, as truly wise and prudent servants of God, in all the circumstances of this life, even in adversity and sufferings, cheerfully to submit to the will of God, avoid all illicit attachments, serve God in innocence and

justice, and with a joyful heart praise our heavenly Father, and give Him thanks for the many benefits He has bestowed upon us.

The Apostle in this Epistle first calls our attention to the fact that the days of our life are evil, that is subject to many dangers and temptations, and filled with many difficulties and adversities. "Two things," says St. Augustine, "make the days evil: MALICE and MISERY. Although re-born, we live through evil days until the punishment of this mortality ceases, and the grace of the greatest happiness follows. No one can say: Our ancestors enjoyed good days, but we have evil ones; for they also have repeated these words of the Apostle. Since Adam sinned, and was banished from paradise, there has been nothing but evil days. Let us ask the new-born babes, why weeping they commence their life, since they would laugh. Their tears are witnesses of human misery." We should, therefore, profit by this time so full of uncertainty and affliction, and use it for our salvation, but at the same time we should be careful not to waste it foolishly.

The Apostle then declares drunkenness to be a sin by which time is idly spent, and which induces man to transgress the commandments of God, because it entirely destroys within him the dominion of the spirit, it debases man, so that he becomes the slave of sensuality, and makes him capable of committing any other sin.

While the Apostle warns us against drunkenness, and also against sinful and excessive frivolity, he exhorts us to REJOICE IN THE LORD (see also Philipp. 4 : 4); he then directs us, in order to avoid the wicked and immoral songs of drunkards, to sing psalms and hymns. St. Chrysostom says on this subject: "As singing is useful to cheer up our hearts, Almighty God inspired David to write Psalms in order that the devils might not confound all by introducing wicked and immoral songs, but that we might derive profit and joy from singing sacred hymns."

In regard to the admonition of St. Paul, *to give thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, St. Jerome says: "Jews and Gentiles thank God also for the benefits received, but according to the Apostle, the great virtue of gratitude consists in giving thanks to God in danger and adversity, and in saying: Thanks be to God! I know that I suffer less than I deserve, for my sufferings are as nothing compared with my sins; nothing can happen to me that I have not deserved."

GOSPEL.—John 4 : 46—53.

"At that time: There was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders, you

believe not. The ruler saith to him: Lord, come down before that my son die. Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way. And as he was going down, his servants met him; and they brought word, saying that his son lived. He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him: Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth; and himself believed, and his whole house."

The Church commands us in this Gospel, according to the example of the ruler of Capharnaum, whose son was lying very sick and nearly dead, to have recourse in our tribulations and sorrows to Almighty God, firmly hoping to obtain from Him all we require for the happiness of both soul and body.

When the ruler went to Christ and prayed Him to come down and heal his son, our Saviour, before acceding to his request, reproached him and the other Jews present with the weakness of their faith, by saying: "*Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not.*" The ruler was of the opinion that it was necessary, as with the physician, for our Saviour to be present, in order to heal his son; he, therefore, had not yet the right perception of the wonderful power of the Saviour.

Upon the repeated solicitation of the ruler to visit his son, our Saviour answered him by saying: "Go thy way, thy son liveth." He granted his request in so far as the healing of his son was concerned, but He did not go with him to his house. "Why," asks St. Chrysostom, "did Christ voluntarily offer to visit the house of the centurion of Capharnaum, while in this case He did not go, although solicited? Because in the first instance faith was perfect, in the other imperfect. The ruler did not understand that the Lord, although absent, could heal; He, therefore, did not accompany him, in order to show him that He could heal his son although not present; the ruler, therefore, was obliged to learn by our Saviour's refusing to come, what the centurion had learned of himself.

The ruler believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way. His faith, therefore, had already increased, since he no longer doubted but that his son was healed, although our Saviour had not seen him. St. Cyril remarks that Christ by one word accomplished two cures; He had healed the ruler in soul, because he believed in the power of miracles which Christ possessed, and He delivered the ruler's son from his bodily illness. And when the ruler had heard from his servants that his son was cured in the same hour in which our Saviour had told him: "Go thy way, thy son liveth," his faith in Jesus had reached perfection; convinced of the divine omnipotence of the Saviour, he now considered Him not only a MAN who could perform miracles, but the MESSIAH, and while he had before only believed in the Saviour on account of the promise He had

made to him, he now, as a disciple of Christ, believed IN HIM as the promised Redeemer. "From this we can perceive," remarks the venerable Bede, "that there are degrees in faith as in other virtues which have a beginning, attain a certain growth, and finally reach perfection. The faith of the ruler began when he asked for the health of his son; it commenced to grow when he believed the Lord, who said: '*Go thy way, thy son liveth;*' it reached perfection when the servant informed him that his son lived." And not content to believe himself in Christ, he converted his entire household to the same faith, an instructive example, worthy of imitation for parents, superiors, and all who have influence over others. A true and lively faith is not without zeal, not dumb, not idle, not unfruitful, and every true Christian, who is filled with real love for his faith, and with gratitude to God for the grace of the true faith, and with zeal for His glory, will never neglect to admonish in a spirit of meekness, modesty, perseverance, and charity those over whom he exercises influence, and who have no knowledge of truth, and who are not enlightened by divine grace, urging them to forsake their errors, and to obtain the most precious of all treasures, true faith in Christ, which is the foundation of eternal happiness.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

ST. MEDAR.

(October 1.)

"Holy Childhood."

ST. MEDAR was descended from a noble British family, his father Melian being Duke of Cornwall. At that time God had shut up the heavens, and no rain had fallen for seven years. In the seventh year, however, the nobles of the country assembled for the purpose of remedying the great distress, and thither came also Rinold, who, urged by the evil spirit, killed his brother Melian, and took possession of his territory.

After he had murdered his brother Melian, he sought also to do away with his nephew Medar, the son of Melian, who was then seven years old, fearing that he might later claim the dukedom of his father. For that purpose Rinold took the boy with him to Cornwall, where the Bishops and many other nobles had assembled. At their earnest request the boy was not put to death, but only deprived of his right hand and left foot. The unfortunate prince then found a refuge in one of the monasteries of Cornwall, and occupying himself with the study of the sacred writings, he there spent his days in innocence and great piety.

Medar was fourteen years old, when his uncle Rinold, by the promise of rich presents and large estates induced Cerialtan, who was the guardian of the young prince in the monastery, to put Medar to death. After the horrible crime had been committed, Cerialtan's son was secretly to bring the head of the murdered boy to Rinold; but when climbing the abbey wall, he fell to the ground, broke his neck, and expired.

Cerialtan then took the head, and hastened with it to Rinold, who received him with great joy, and said: "Go and ascend the top of the mountain, and all the estates you can see from there you may take." And Cerialtan

ascended the mountain, but while he was looking about, he was suddenly blinded, and died on the spot. His flesh also became liquid like wax, melted by the heat.

St. Medar was buried in the place where he had suffered martyrdom, but the following day his body was found lying upon the grave, and the same thing happened after he had been buried in three different places. They were advised, therefore, to lay the body of the Saint upon a wagon to which two wild bulls had been harnessed—and, behold! the bulls became at once tamed, and drew the wagons until they had reached a certain place, followed by a great crowd of people. All efforts to drive them further were in vain, and no human power was able to move the wagon; the multitude, therefore, praised and thanked God, and there buried the murdered prince. And the assistance of the Saint was granted to many who implored it with a trusting heart.

Three days after Rinold had received the head of the martyr, he died a most wretched death; the head of St. Medar was buried in the same place with the rest of his body, later, however, it was brought as a relic to the church of Ambrieburia, where it was venerated by the faithful. The church was once entered by robbers, who carried off the shrine of St. Medar, robbed it of its gold, and threw the reliquary with the relics into a cave, but a priest who had risen before day-break, perceived a luminous cloud reaching from the sky to the cave; he approached, found the shrine, and carried it back to the church.

Why is young Medar called a martyr? He did not die for his faith, but fell a victim to the ambition of his uncle. If a child is baptized his soul is pure and beautiful before God, and if he dies there is nothing that prevents his immediately entering heaven; but such a child's soul has no merit of its own, it rests entirely in that of Jesus Christ. Yet if a child has so far advanced in age that he knows and loves God, and manifests this by a pious life, then his soul is certainly most pleasing to God, and if he dies we may well ask his intercession with our Father in heaven. If a pure and holy child before he dies has to undergo afflictions and torments, then such sufferings are not, as is commonly the case with older persons, a means of correction for sins committed, but they are designed as special honors for him. God grants him thereby a higher rank in heaven; he thus resembles Christ, who also suffered without guilt. A child that suffers much with Christian patience is loved by God with unspeakable love, and raised to the dignity and glory of a martyr. This was especially proved in the case of St. Medar by the miracles worked through the agency of his relics.

Therefore, dear reader, if your own child or that of your neighbor is called upon to suffer, do not let your heart harbor doubts of God's providence or goodness; look with the light of your Christian faith beyond this world, and consider that God by this cross gives to the child the special assurance of joy and happiness in the world to come. Teach the suffering child to direct with love

his young soul to the Father in heaven and Jesus Christ, and in case of his death he will prove a powerful intercessor for you in heaven. It even appears that God sometimes grants to such young martyrs the joy of bringing help to afflicted men on earth, just as Christian parents here below often make their children the agents of their charity. And this seems to be proved by the following occurrence. St. Medar once appeared in the night to the sacristan of the church, saying: "Godrich, rise! the roof of the church is about to give way." He had the same vision the two nights following, and the last time he heard the words: "Godrich, rise at once, take away the statues and ornaments of the altar, and leave as quickly as possible; for you are in the greatest danger." This time he obeyed the warning voice, and he had scarcely left the church, when the roof fell.

ST. THOMAS OF CANTELUPE.

(October 2.)

'Requisites for Salvation,

This Saint was at first chancellor of England, and then Bishop of Hereford. In the canonization of a person the strictest and most minute examination is made. The testimony taken respecting the life of St. Thomas of Cantelupe is still extant; it is that given by Bishop Richard, who knew the Saint for fourteen years, and succeeded him in his see.

Before Thomas was chosen Bishop, he avoided as much as possible all intercourse with women, even his nearest relatives. His innocence was so child-like that when ambiguous jests were made in his presence, at which others laughed, he would ask the cause of their mirth; but when he understood the meaning, he always sharply reproached the indecent jester. When once asked why his nephew, whom he had greatly loved, no longer enjoyed his favor, he said: "The young people are not as modest as they should be. If a handsome woman had looked at me when I was young, I would have blushed, and turned away; but now young men do the very reverse.

Bishop Richard also testifies that Thomas ate and drank so little that it appeared impossible for a healthy person to be so self-denying. Once he asked the Saint, who dined with him, why he had eaten so sparingly, and if he had no appetite. On another occasion St. Thomas declared that for thirty years he had never fully appeased his hunger. It was a rule with him to send the best dishes of his table to the poor; on Fridays he ate only bread and vegetables, and the

day preceding the feasts of the Mother of God only bread and water. When he had company, and politeness required him to offer wine to his guests, he raised the goblet to his lips without really tasting the contents.

In order to mortify his body, he always wore a hair shirt, slept for the most part on the bare floor, and frequently passed the whole night in praying, reading, or writing. When celebrating Mass, he was penetrated with grief and sorrow, and shed as many tears as if the altar was the mount of Calvary, and he witnessing the crucifixion of Christ. He, therefore, not only spent much time in offering the sacrifice of the Mass, but he always said the breviary very slowly, and would recite daily the seven penitential Psalms, and the office for the dead.

Besides chastity, mortification, and true piety of heart, humility and charity are also most essential requisites of true sanctity, and the fact that Thomas in his forty-fourth year resigned the office of high-chancellor to devote himself to the study of theology and the service of the Church, and the great reluctance with which he later accepted the Episcopal office, clearly shows how deeply the virtue of humility was planted in his heart. He suffered much from John, Archbishop of Canterbury, as well as from those who occupied a less exalted position; but his great humility and truly Christian patience overcame them all, and he never gave way to anger. Not less great was the virtue of charity which adorned his saintly heart. He called the poor his brothers, and regarded them as such. When he heard that persons belonging to the higher classes had been reduced to poverty by misfortune, he endeavored to assist them in secret. When he met a funeral, he never omitted to dismount, and offer up a prayer for the deceased before he proceeded.

Of St. Thomas as chancellor of King Henry, we read: "He was truthful in speech, prudent in counsel, and faithful in the management of his office. Presents and bribes never polluted his hands. He checked the pride of the rich, never deviated from the truth, listened willingly to the poor, and manifested his Christian heart by his charity."

But if St. Thomas was distinguished for his fidelity in the service of his king and country, he was certainly not less so in the service of God as a Bishop. He was indefatigable in the pulpit and in the confessional, and paid so little regard to the rank or position of the sinner that he excommunicated a nobleman by the name of Reginald for his great sins, and did not admit him again into the Church until he had submitted to a becoming penance. Another baron, Roger of Clifford, had during a general war imprisoned a Bishop, the predecessor of St. Thomas, for the purpose of extorting money. He afterwards wished to be reconciled to the Church, and brought twelve hundred florins to St. Thomas in order to exempt himself from doing public penance, but the Saint refused to take the money, and insisted that Roger should acknowledge his wrong and his repentance in the church before the people barefoot, and in a

hair shirt. Though this Saint from his great intellect and learning had been made high-chancellor, yet in his great humility and conscientiousness, he would never undertake anything of importance without first listening to the opinion of his Episcopal advisers. No toil or danger was too great to undergo to regain the privileges of which unscrupulous and violent knights and nobles had deprived the Church; and once he was even obliged to go to Rome to maintain the claims of the Episcopate against the usurpation of Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury.

St. Thomas had for many years suffered from attacks of sickness, and on his return from Rome he was seized with a fatal illness. Weakened by age and hardships, he felt that his hour had come, and after having received the last Sacraments, he died in the Lord, with the words: "Into Thy hands I recommend my spirit."

ST. MENNA.

(October 3.)

"Godfather and Godmother."

"THE saintly virgin Menna, worthy to be praised by all the faithful," says an old book, "shone in her native village Segout like a light in the darkness. Her mother Lientrud is buried in the church of St. Peter in the celebrated city of Romarichsberg, and her father, whose name was Mansus, possessed large estates, and a magnificent castle, which now, however, is entirely in ruins."

Mansus requested Bishop Memmius to stand godfather to his child, and the saintly Bishop fulfilled the wish of the father with joy. As he was a most wonderfully enlightened man, he perceived the seeds of future sanctity in the child, and asked that she should be brought to him in her fifth year. The parents complied with the request. Memmius sent the little maiden to a convent, and the pious nuns instructed her in a truly Christian and happy life.

At the end of five years, as Mansus and Lientrud longed for their daughter, Memmius could not resist their desire, and brought the child back; first exhorting his goddaughter to follow the good example set before her. What Menna had been taught in the quiet convent, she now put into practice in the castle of her father, so that she was soon honored and loved by all. Her beauty and loveliness increased with her years, and was only surpassed by her piety and good works;

no wonder, then, that Menna, thus adorned, was loved and sought for by many young men of the highest rank, and her parents at length made arrangements to unite her with a rich and powerful lord.

When Menna learned the intention of her parents, she firmly refused to marry, and said: "I wish only to be the bride of the Lamb, that is to taste the sweet joy of the inhabitants of heaven, whose beauty never withers."

The father, regarding his daughter's refusal as a mere caprice, prepared to carry out his design; the wedding-day was appointed, and the most magnificent arrangements were made. Meanwhile the pious virgin, bathed in tears, most fervently prayed to Christ, and recommended her purity to Him; and He looked down upon the pious struggle of His beloved servant, and granting her His assistance, He inspired her with a wise resolution. She succeeded in escaping from the castle, and accompanied by several trustworthy attendants, returned to the residence of her godfather, who had bestowed so much care upon her education. The Bishop, when she arrived, was surrounded by the priests of his diocese, but he received Menna with much honor and dignity, and the next morning, while he was presiding over the synod, she stepped before him and demanded a dowry or godchild's present, a demand that he, as her godfather, could not refuse her. The whole synod, and the presiding Bishop himself were greatly astonished, and asked what she meant. But she said: "You know, my lord, that I owe you a debt of gratitude for having shown me the road leading to life everlasting, but my father strives to frustrate the intention of my heart, and wishes to entangle me in the bonds of marriage, and in the affairs of this world, which my soul despises. Therefore I have come here to implore your assistance, convinced that, if it is your earnest will, you are able to free me from what I dread. I beseech you then with all my heart to finish in me the good work, of which you laid the foundation in my early youth. Cover my head with the veil of the Lamb as a sign of my irrevocable and sacred betrothal to Jesus Christ." And having spoken thus, she held forth a veil, fell on her knees, and, bursting into tears, begged the Bishop most imploringly to bless her without delay. The saintly Memmius was always most zealous, and never hesitated, if it was in his power, to save a soul; but on this occasion he thought, though unwillingly, it would be better not to comply with the wish of his goddaughter; for the power, influence, and violence of the father, as also of the man to whom the latter had promised his daughter in marriage, were greatly to be feared.

But while the Bishop, in a state of fear mingled with doubt, held the veil in his hands, behold! it was taken from his hands by an invisible power, and spread over the head of the virgin. Thus the Angels clothed with the veil the virgin who was designed to shine in the world by her virtues, and all present rendered thanks to God Almighty for the miracle he had worked in behalf of His pious servant. When Mansus heard of the miraculous event, he con-

sented joyfully to his daughter devoting herself to the service of the Lord, and after she had remained for some time with the Bishop in order to complete her religious education, she returned to her father's house, where she was received with love and veneration.

St. Menna owed the great religious perfection of her mind, after God, to the pious care of her godfather; and for the purpose of procuring and securing such benefits to the child, our holy Catholic Church has directed that no child shall be baptized without having a godfather or godmother. They should not only promise in the name of the child to accept the Christian faith, and to live a Christian life, but they should also take care that the promise is fulfilled which they made before God and to the Church.

St. Menna, after the death of her father, left her home in the company of one of her servants, and lived at Fontenoy-le-Chatel, near the Vosges mountains, until she yielded up her spirit Some of her relics are preserved and venerated in the city of Metz.

ST. FRANCIS ASSISI.

(October 4.)

"Poverty."

St. Francis Assisi, founder of the great order of Friars Minor, was the son of a merchant. His conduct in youth was far from being that of a Saint. He could not be accused of wickedness, but, unlike his prudent father, he was a great spendthrift, famous for extravagance in clothes, frequent costly banquets, and love of pleasure; yet, despite all this, the poor man never appealed to him in vain. The youth, however, was taken sick, and while his body suffered from pain, his soul began to grow in wisdom. The world then appeared to him empty and frivolous, and he despised his former folly; he did not renounce gay company on his recovery, though conscience was at work. Once his companions, seeing that he did not share their mirth, asked if he was in love or intended to marry, and Francis replied: "Indeed, I intend marrying one who is more noble, beautiful, and rich than all the women on earth."

St. Francis' love of the poor and poverty greatly increased. In a pilgrimage to Rome he exchanged his elegant clothes for a mendicant's, and lived by begging at church-doors. After his return the breach between Francis and his father, who was a grasping merchant, widened. His father at last accused him

of extravagance before the Bishop of the city. Francis then handed all the money in his possession, and even his clothes, to his father, saying: "Henceforth I have no father but the Father who is in heaven." He then put on some old clothes of the Bishop's servant, making a cross on them with chalk.

When Francis had thus renounced all property, the love of God that filled his heart, no longer hidden by earthly rubbish, shone forth in all its power and greatness. He once felt urged to a deed from which the rich generally shrink on account of the expense: A man who, beyond the rags that covered his body, could call nothing his own, successively repaired three ruinous churches. In the poor habit of a hermit he wandered through the streets of his native city, proclaiming with a loud voice the greatness of God and the wants of the Church, and addressed the people who passed him with: "He who presents me with one stone, receives a single reward; he who presents me with two, receives a twofold, and he who gives me three stones, receives a threefold reward." Many, deeming him mad, derided him; others were greatly touched to see the miraculous change in one who had formerly led so luxurious a life. Regardless of the jeers of his former companions, he lived by begging, and continued carrying stones on his shoulders to complete his holy work, for which he received rich contributions. The life of a beggar which Francis had chosen, was looked upon as very disgraceful by his father, and he cursed and abused his son whenever he met him. Francis then said to a very wretched beggar: "Be my father, come live with me; I will give you all the alms I collect; and every time you hear my father curse me, mark me with the sign of the holy cross, and bless me." And his wish was complied with.

By enabling St. Francis in his poverty to restore three churches crumbling to ruins, it was the will of God to foreshow that his servant was later to be a spiritual repairer of the Church. The last of the three churches he restored was consecrated to Mary, and called Portiuncula, after the place in which it was built, and by its side he built himself a hut which became his favorite abode. One day, when present at Mass, he heard the words of the Gospel: "And he said to them: Take nothing for your journey; neither staff, nor scrip, nor bread, nor money; neither have two coats." And they found such an echo in his heart that he most joyfully exclaimed: "This is the desire of my heart," and he immediately gave away everything he still possessed, even his shoes, retaining only a coarse habit, and a rope as a girdle. He determined to follow the footsteps of the Apostle, and, going from place to place, build up the invisible church in Christian hearts. Wherever he came he preached words of penance, peace, and salvation.

Once a man, whose face was terribly eaten by a cancer, threw himself at the feet of Francis, imploring his intercession, because many regarded him already as a Saint. Francis kissed the cancered spot in the man's face, and cured it. "We know not," says St. Bonaventure, "which to admire most,

the kiss or the cure." St. Francis soon found disciples who, attracted by his preaching and example, joined him.

As the number increased daily, St. Francis found it necessary to lay down a rule for them, which he divided into twenty-three chapters. He prescribed especially that no one could be received into the order without first giving up all his property to the poor, and that all the members of the order must support themselves either by working or begging. To follow Christ as nearly as possible was the principal task imposed upon every member. To obtain the approval of his rule, he went to Rome. When the matter was brought before the congregation of Cardinals, some found the rule of poverty prescribed by St. Francis too rigid, and impossible to be carried out. The Bishop of Sabina, however, rose, and said: "If we reject this rule then we reject the Gospel itself; for it only inculcates Evangelic perfection, and to say this rule is not reasonable or possible, is to blaspheme Christ." Pope Innocent III. then confirmed the new order.

St. Francis and his companions, rejoicing at their success, returned to Portiuncula, and proceeded to preach the Gospel by word and example. The Friars Minor, as they were called, wore but a single garment, and they wore it until threadbare. When traveling, they cared little for lodgings even in the most bitter cold of winter, and the first ray of the sun found them again occupied with their work, and what they obtained by begging or working they gave again to the poor.

In all the glorious virtues exercised by the disciples of St. Francis, the latter was their teacher and most excellent model. He called the spirit of poverty the foundation of his order. According to his rule all the convents of the order, and even their churches, were to be small and plain. He seldom ate boiled food, abstained entirely from wine, and generally slept on the bare ground. His purity was so great that he avoided as much as possible all conversation with women, and in his humility he despised praise and honor, sought for humiliations, and even thought himself unworthy of being ordained priest. He abhorred every kind of hypocrisy, and in order to exercise himself continually in the virtue of obedience, he made the brother who accompanied him on his missionary travels, his superior, obeying his orders most readily and faithfully.

St. Francis exercised and especially recommended *mental prayer;* he prayed unceasingly, labored indefatigably for the conversion of all sinners, and exhorted the members of his order to do the same. So as to banish every trace of haughtiness and pride from the latter, he called them Friars Minor (Lesser Brethren). Not three years had elapsed before the order counted sixty convents; at a Chapter-General, held by St. Francis ten years later, five thousand friars were present, and not fifty years after its establishment the order numbered two hundred thousand religious. Some time after God added to this order another branch: the order of St. Clare (see August 12), the nuns of which,

imitating the example of St. Francis and his brotherhood, led also a life of poverty and self-denial.

The love of God that penetrated the heart of this holy man, induced him to visit Palestine, to preach the Gospel to the Saracens, and, perhaps, die there a martyr. After he had in the year 1212 once more assembled his disciples, and exhorted them to remain faithful to the rule of the order, he set out upon his missionary journey.

St. Francis embarked, but a violent storm arose, and after he had been for a long time at sea, he was obliged to return without having effected his purpose. He was now taken very ill, and later when he intended to visit Morocco, Africa, to labor and die there as a missionary in the service of the Lord, and had already reached Spain, he was again detained by a protracted disease. Several years after he felt again a great desire to propagate Christianity among the Turks, and, if possible, die for his faith. He sailed for Egypt, where the Crusaders had just besieged the city of Damietta, and though he predicted a defeat, they engaged in battle with the Saracens, suffering a loss of six thousand men. The sultan offered a reward for every Christian delivered to him, yet St. Francis nevertheless set out with his companion Illuminatus to appear before him. When near the Mahometan camp, they were seized, most cruelly abused, and led in chains into the presence of the sultan. Standing before the mighty ruler of the faithless, St. Francis spoke fearlessly and most powerfully of the triune God; and the sultan could not but admire the wonderful courage of the man, and invited him to stay, offering him at the same time rich presents. But St. Francis saw that he could not gain the sultan to Christ, and after he had remained with the Saracens for several days, and preached the Gospel, he returned unharmed to the Christian camp. (We are told that St. Francis, when leaving the camp, was requested by the sultan to pray for him, and that from that time the Christians were treated by the Saracens with less cruelty; and it was rumored that the sultan became a Christian before his death.) From Egypt St. Francis went to Palestine, where from his time to the present day Franciscan friars represent the Catholic religion; and though those who lived there have frequently been murdered by the Turks, other Franciscans were always found ready to go and take their place, and to pray near the holy sepulchre for the welfare of Christendom.

After his return to Italy, Francis resumed again with great zeal and success his missionary labors in the cities and villages. The whole city of Canara, inspired by the powerful words of this Saint, wished to renounce all their possessions, and join his order. This, of course, could not be granted, but St. Francis then founded the Third Order, that is, he laid down a rule, by means of which such as are prevented from entering a religious order, and must live in the world, are guided to a Christian life, pleasing to God. This Third Order was propagated among all classes of society with such success, that even princes

and kings embraced its rule. The little manger we see in so many Catholic churches and dwellings at Christmas, for the special purpose of promoting devotion in the young, originated also with St. Francis. On Christmas-eve he had prepared in a rocky valley near Rieti a crib, such as he had seen in Bethlehem, representing the great poverty of the Child Jesus, lying on hay between an ox and ass. The people came to the spot from all parts with burning torches, high Mass was solemnly celebrated, and St. Francis then preached *on the birth of the poor King.*

The more St. Francis, by a life of self-denial, freed himself from all bonds of sensuality and worldliness, and the more his spirit, by intense love, lived in God, the more clearly and miraculously was his union with God manifested. Yet only one of the miracles worked by this power can be mentioned here. St. Francis had betaken himself to Mount Alverno, a wild and lonely spot, to fast forty days in honor of the Archangel Michael. While in fervent prayer, and entirely dissolved in love for the Crucified, a most radiant Seraph, with six wings, suddenly descended from heaven, and stood opposite to him. The figure of Christ crucified appeared amid the wings, two of which the Angel had spread over his head, two extended for flying, and the other two covered his whole body. St. Francis never revealed the mysterious words addressed to him in this vision, but from this time the stigmata or wounds of Christ were seen on his body. His hands and feet showed on one side the heads of the nails, and on the other side the points of the nails projecting and bent down, and on his left side was seen a red wound, from which the blood frequently oozed.

The two years which the Saint still spent on earth, were years of great affliction for him, yet he patiently bore the most violent pains, looking up to Christ with such cheerful patience that an eye-witness most appropriately said of him: "His entire body is but a tongue, ever praising God." When towards the end of his sickness he was no longer able to stir a limb, one of the brethren asked him if he would not rather suffer the most cruel death from the hand of the executioner than such a lingering and agonizing disease, and St. Francis replied: "What my Lord does to me is most dear and sweet and agreeable to me; I only desire to be always conformed and obedient to His will." When he felt his end drawing near, he expressed a wish to be carried to Portiuncula, to die in the place where he had commenced to live in God; and when the hour of his death arrived, in order that he might die as he had lived, in perfect poverty, he asked to be laid divested of all clothes on the bare ground. They did as he wished, the guardian only covering him with a piece of linen cloth. He then began to sing, for he felt that he was near the threshold of heaven. When he had yielded up his spirit, the people came in crowds, and looked upon, and kissed the miraculous spots which were seen on his hands and feet, and the red wound on his left side. The day of his death was not like that of other persons a day of mourning, but the people of Assisi praised and blessed God at the

glorious departure of so great a Saint. With songs of joy and sounds of trumpets, carrying burning tapers and torches, as if marching in a triumphal procession, the inhabitants of the city followed the funeral procession, and a magnificent temple was erected over the tomb of the Saint of Poverty.

ST. GALLA.

(October 5.)

"Widowhood."

THE widow whose biography we sketch for the edification of our readers, was so distinguished for the piety of her life that in her honor a church was erected in Rome, and is still known by her name. Pope Gregory the Great, who lived before the death of St. Galla (see March 12), describes her life thus:

"I think I cannot pass over in silence what I learned through the agency of trustworthy persons. During the reign of the Goths, Galla, the most noble maiden of the city of Rome, daughter of Symmachus, the consul, was married, when still very young, to a man who died in the first year of their marriage. Although her great wealth and beauty invited her to form a second marriage, she preferred to unite herself with God in spiritual marriage, that generally begins with sadness, but ends in joys everlasting, than choose an earthly marriage that always begins with joy, but generally ends in sorrow.

"Accordingly soon after the death of her husband, renouncing the world and its empty pleasures, she retired to a convent connected with the church of St. Peter the Apostle, where she for many years served the Almighty in great piety, and satisfied her charitable heart by giving rich alms. But God the Almighty intended to give to her pious works an everlasting reward, and she was afflicted with a cancerous ulcer on her breast. Galla abhorred not only all spiritual darkness, but also physical darkness, and she, therefore, at night time always had two lights burning before her bed. Once when greatly suffering from her disease, and lying awake in her bed, she saw St. Peter, the Apostle, standing between the two lights, and, greatly encouraged by her love, she said, joyfully: 'What is it, my lord—are my sins forgiven?' And he, with his countenance beaming with the greatest serenity, bowed his head, and said: 'They are forgiven—come!' Galla had in the convent a friend, a very pious woman, whom she loved with all her heart, and she said then: 'I pray, let Sister Benedicta come with me.' But St. Peter replied: 'No, but Natalia shall accompany thee, and she whom thou desirest, shall follow thee on the thirtieth day.'

Hereupon the vision disappeared. Galla immediately sent for the Prioress, and revealed to her what she had seen and heard. Three days later she and Sister Natalia departed this life, and the thirtieth day she was followed by her friend, as had been announced to her. This event is to the present day commemorated in the convent, and, as handed down by the former occupants, circumstantially related by the present nuns as if they themselves had witnessed it."

Besides this report of the celebrated Pope Gregory I., regarding the life of St. Galla, there is also a letter extant, addressed to her by Fulgentius, another Father of the Church, when he had been informed of the death of her husband, and of her intention of devoting her life to God. "Conjugal chastity," says he, "and the continence of widowhood, are both gifts of God; the former is praiseworthy and good, the latter, however, more praiseworthy and better. Blessed is she who out of horror of sin contracts no unlawful marriage, but more blessed still is she who out of a higher love of purity even despises a lawful union. Blessed is she who, when married, faithfully fulfills her conjugal duty to her husband; but more blessed is she who remains unmarried in order not to be bound to that duty. Therefore, by having lost thy husband, and being now a widow, God has not deprived thee of a gift, but even increased it. It was the Lord's wish that thou shouldst gradually increase in virtue; first, by living with a husband in faithful union, and then as a widow in continence. Marriage is one of the blessings which may be accepted, but also refused. Susanna well guarded the matrimonial tie in conjugal chastity; Judith and Anna refused to renew it in their widowhood, and Mary has best kept it in perfect purity. Matrimony is, therefore, not to be counted among the most excellent gifts of God, though it cannot be denied that it is a divine gift. For if we had to regard it as belonging to the first, the Saviour would not have praised such as live in perfect chastity for the sake of the heavenly kingdom. He condemns not that which is good, but praises more that which is better; He hates not the former, but loves more the latter.

"Ascend, then, from virtue to virtue, and as with the death of thy husband the cause of earthly solicitude has ceased, let thy spirit turn from things that are earthly and perishable to those that are heavenly and everlasting."

ST. FAITH.

(October 6.)

"Strength from God."

THE Secret of the Mass to be said in commemoration of St. Faith, as found in an old missal, contains the following: "O God who art always glorious in Thy Saints, and who showest even in the most feeble the virtue of Thy power, surpassing all the powers of the world: accept the sacrifice we offer Thee in memory of St. Faith, Thy saintly virgin and martyr, and grant that the prayers of her whose holy life and glorious martyrdom have pleased Thee, may assist us before Thy throne. Through Jesus Christ, Thy Son and our Lord. Amen." Fear and timidity are very natural in a young maiden, and the most trifling cause frequently alarms them, and makes them tremble; the glorious power of God becomes therefore the more visible, when such are enabled to undergo fearlessly the death of a martyr, from which even the most courageous shrinks back.

St. Faith, born in Agen, of noble parents, became by her glorious death the patron of her native place. Showing to the Christians how to die as a Christian, she preferred to lose temporal life in order to gain life everlasting. Though young in years, she was mature in thought and action, and though her bodily beauty was very great, it was still surpassed by the beauty of her soul and her spotless purity.

Dacian, the wicked judge, sent by the Emperor Diocletian to the city of Agen, had ordered Faith, accused of being a Christian, to be brought before his tribunal. Turning to the Lord in fervent prayer, she said: "Lord Jesus Christ, who art ever assisting the faithful, be now with Thy servant, and inspire me with the right answer in the presence of the tyrant." "How art thou called?" asked the judge. "Faith, in name and deed," was her reply. "In whom dost thou believe?" "I am a Christian from my earliest youth, and serve and love the Lord Jesus Christ with all my heart," answered she. The judge then said, with seeming kindness: "Take my advice, young maiden, and have regard to thy beauty and youth, renounce this religion, and offer sacrifice to the most sacred goddess Diana, who is one of thy sex; I will besides enrich thee with precious gifts." The saintly virgin of Christ was not to be seduced by such a promise, and replied: "By the tradition of the fathers I know that all the idols of the pagans are devils, and yet thou wouldst persuade me to worship them?" Burning with passion, Dacian exclaimed: "How durst thou call our gods demons! Either worship the gods or I will order thee to be put to the rack!" But St. Faith, strengthened by the example of the great martyrs, and aspiring after the glory of heaven, despised these threats, and said: "I am not only

ready to undergo the torments of the rack for the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, but also to suffer death for my confession." The judge then ordered the virgin to be fastened upon an iron couch, and a fire to be kindled beneath it. The executioner poured oil into the fire in order to increase the flames. Many who witnessed this unheard of cruelty, exclaimed: "O wickedness and injustice! Why must such a noble, innocent, and guiltless virgin and worshiper of the true God submit to such punishment?" For there were many who, on seeing the firmness of St. Faith, freed themselves from the cursed yoke of the demons, and believed in Jesus Christ. And they, too, obtained the glorious crown of martyrdom, and were admitted to the everlasting joys of heaven; for when neither flatteries, promises, nor threats could induce them to bend longer before the idols they had just before worshiped, they were beheaded by order of Dacian.

How many Christians, when exhorted by conscience, by a confessor, by a sermon, by the impressive language of a book, or by the example or word of a true believer, to turn to God and reform, have thought and felt: *I cannot.* And, indeed, we cannot make ourselves better by our own power. Yet this is no excuse for continuing in a sinful life; for that which we cannot do by our own power, we can accomplish through God. He who endowed a feeble virgin like Faith with courage and strength to undergo joyfully the most terrible torments of the rack, is also able to endow us with the power of overcoming bad habits, and of living a Christian life. Let us only follow the example of St. Faith, and fervently implore the assistance of God through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Mediator, and God's grace will assist and strengthen us ever and everywhere to do His holy will.

ST. BRIDGET.

(October 7.)

"Causes of Damnation,"

St. Bridget was a princess of Sweden, of parents distinguished for their piety. When still very young, she was married to a prince by the name of Ulfo, and they lived together in love and harmony. Bridget carefully avoided all amusements and company that would be injurious to a Christian heart; she surrounded herself with trustworthy servants, followed faithfully the advice of her confessor, never indulged in luxury, and spent much of her time in prayer, in works of mercy, and in reading religious books.

All her tenderness and Christian care were devoted to the education of her

sons and daughters. She taught them while they were yet young to turn their souls to God. She impressed upon them the duty they had to fulfill towards the afflicted and suffering, and by her efforts she also succeeded in rendering the father of her children as distinguished for his fear of God, as he was celebrated for his military skill, and for his wisdom as a ruler. Both parents, accompanied by their children, made a pilgrimage to Compostella in Spain to the tomb of St. James; there both vowed to renounce the world, and Ulfo soon after died in the convent of the Cistercians at Alvastro.

After the death of her husband, Bridget divided her possessions among her children and the poor, and remained for two years in the place where her husband had died, leading a life of penance and mortification, unconcerned abo the ridicule of the world

Inspired by God, she went as a chosen instrument to Rome, exhorting and admonishing the low and the high, nursing the sick, and devoting herself to all possible works of charity. Later she made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and having returned to Rome, she was seized with illness, received the last Sacraments, and yielded up her spirit while Mass was being said in her room. Her dying words were: "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit!" Her remains were afterwards taken to Sweden, and deposited in the convent of Wadstena, which had been founded by her.

St. Bridget enjoys a great reputation on account of the revelations with which the Lord favored her, and which she wrote down herself. We will give a few extracts from one of them regarding a very important religious truth.

"*Judgment and damnation of a soul.*—"God said: Behold, this soul is not mine. It had no pity for the wound in my side and heart. And the Lord said to the soul: Thou didst frequently ask while on earth, why I, thy Saviour, died. I now ask thee, why didst thou die, poor soul? It replied: Because I loved thee not. The Lord continued: I suffered as much for thee as for any of my Saints, yet thou didst not care for that. Therefore thou shalt not share now the unspeakable joys of the Saints, because thou didst prefer thy own joys. Go then to the place where thou shalt live for ever in death, because thou wouldst not live in my life and light."

"He whose soul stood before the judge, had been a man of rank who had cared little for God, and died in wickedness and without the holy Sacraments. The judge said: "From My chosen ministers didst thou not hear the words: 'I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live. 'Why then didst thou not return to me when it was still in thy power to do so?' And the soul replied: 'I often heard the words, but did not believe in them.' Again the judge asked: 'Didst thou not hear that I, the Eternal and Just, am a terrible judge? 'Why then didst thou not fear the terrible judgment?' 'I heard it,' replied the soul, 'but in my selfishness I closed my ears, and hardened my heart.' When damned by the judge, the soul exclaimed: 'Woe, woe, what a

reward! When will there be an end to it?' And a voice was heard saying: 'As the Creator of all things is without end, so there will be no end for thee!' The Lord then turned to me, and said: 'Behold, my daughter, I show this to thee, that man may recognize how severe I am upon the wicked, and how loving towards the good.'"

ST. PELAGIA.

(October 8.)

"To Please God."

St. Pelagia lived in the fourth century after Christ. Once eight Bishops were sitting before a house in Antioch, having been summoned to a synod by the Bishop of that city. While listening with admiration to the edifying instructions of Nonnus, the saintly Bishop of Edessa, the principal dancer and actress of the city, most gorgeously arrayed, and preceded and followed by a large number of pages and female attendants, rode by. The people in the street were dazzled by her great beauty and display of pomp, but the Bishops shrunk from the sight of this shameless and impudent woman as from a mortal sin. Blessed Nonnus, however, looked at her most fixedly until she had passed, and then, turning to his brethren, he said: "Were you not pleased with her great beauty?" And they not answering him, he began to weep bitterly, and continued: "Indeed, it has pleased me very much; for God showed it to us in order to make us ashamed of ourselves, and the manner we perform our Episcopal duties. How many hours, my beloved brethren, has this woman spent in adorning herself! What care has she bestowed upon the beauty and array of her body to please those who are but of to-day! And we have in heaven an almighty Father, promising to His faithful treasures and rewards everlasting; we have the assurance of enjoying the sight of the great, glorious, and indescribable countenance on which even the Cherubim dare not look, and yet we make no efforts to cleanse and adorn our wretched soul, but leave it in its neglected condition."

Having spoken thus, he retired with his Deacon to his room, and throwing himself on his knees, and shedding abundant tears, he prayed: "Lord, forgive me, a poor sinner, that the adornment of a wretched woman, prepared for one day, surpasses that of my soul that will live for eternity. How can I justify myself before Thee? Woe to me, poor sinner, standing before Thine altar, and not offering Thee a soul as beautiful as Thou demandest of me. She promised

to please man, and fulfilled her promise, and I promised to please Thee, and my sloth has made me faithless to my promise. I am naked in heaven as on earth, because I fulfill not the requirements of Thy law. There is no hope for me in good works, but my hope is in Thy mercy, by which I trust to be saved!"

A few days later the holy Bishop said: "I am greatly troubled by a dream that I cannot interpret. I saw by the side of the altar a dove covered with filth and dirt, the offensive smell of which I could scarcely bear. After the Gospel was read, and the sacrifice commenced, it disappeared, but after I had finished saying the holy Mass, I perceived it again flying about. I then succeeded in catching the dove, and threw it into the holy water at the entrance of the church, whence it came out as white as snow, and, raising high in the air, vanished from my sight."

Soon after solemn service was held in the cathedral, and Nonnus, who was called upon to preach, spoke with such power of the coming judgment and treasures of heaven that all who heard him burst into tears. The sinful woman mentioned above, happened also to be present, and the exhortations of the inspired preacher made her heart suddenly tremble with fear and anguish at her wretched life. She immediately addressed a letter to St. Nonnus, in which she said: "I heard that Christ came for the sake of sinners, that He associated with sinners, and revealed Himself to the sinful Samaritan at the well. If thou art then a true disciple of that Christ, then reject me not, but assist me in finding the Saviour." Nonnus replied: "God knows whether thou speakest in earnest; if thou art desirous of turning to Christ, then come to me; but I will receive thee in the presence of the other Bishops." And the woman came. Throwing herself on the ground, and clinging to the feet of the Bishop, she exclaimed: "I pray thee, my lord, imitate Jesus Christ, thy master, and make me a Christian; I am a sea of sin, and an abyss of wickedness; I desire to be baptized!" Nonnus told her to rise, and said: "The Church forbids us to baptize a prostitute unless some persons answer for her not returning to her former life of sin." But then she threw herself again at the feet of the Bishop, and, bursting into tears, said with a heart-rending voice: "Thou wilt have to account for my soul, and I lay my sins to thy charge, if thou hesitatest to baptize me. Thou shalt have no part in God if thou dost not baptize, and thereby free me from my sins, and devote me to God!" Such a deep longing for God, and such a great zeal of being united with Him, as penetrated the heart of this wretched woman, had never been seen before by the Bishops, and they no longer hesitated to baptize her.

When Nonnus told her to rise, and make a complete confession, she said: "In searching my heart, I find not the least trace of good, but sins more numerous and heavier than the sand of the sea. And yet I trust in thy God to forgive me my numberless sins." And when asked her name, she replied: "I am called Pelagia."

Shortly after she had been baptized, confirmed, and received the Blessed Sacrament, she handed to St. Nonnus whatever she possessed, all her gold, silver, precious jewels, saying: "These are the treasures whereby Satan has enriched me; dispose of them as thou mayest find best; henceforth I will strive only to enrich myself with my Lord Jesus Christ." And Nonnus comforted with the proceeds many widows, orphans, and needy persons. Pelagia left for ever the city of Antioch, where she had spent her life in sin, and went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. She took up her abode in a cave, near the mount of Olives, where the Lord used to pray, and, separated from the world, she lived for several years a most rigid life of penance, and then died a happy death.

ST. LOUIS BERTRAND.

(October 9.)

"Spiritual Haughtiness."

St. Bertrand had labored several years in his native country, Spain, when he determined to go to South America to preach the Gospel to the Indians, ready to die the death of a martyr if so he might extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The poor Dominican contended in the New World most valiantly in the service of his Lord, and though he had to struggle with, and to overcome the most cruel and superstitious barbarians, though the sword, arrow, and poison frequently endangered his life, his courage was so great, his confidence in God so unshaken, and the miracles he worked by the assistance of the divine grace so convincing, that, when after seven years' labors in New Granada and Central America he was recalled by his superiors to Spain, many thousands of Indians had embraced the faith.

After his return from America he lived as Prior in the convent of Valencia, greatly distinguished for his charity and humility. In order to guard himself against all remissness and partiality in the performance of his duties, he wrote on his door the words of St. Paul the Apostle: "If I did yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal. 1 : 10.) Whenever his duty required it, he admonished, warned, and punished without regard to person or rank.

But whilst St. Louis demanded a most strict obedience to the rules of the convent, an exercise of authority that imposed upon him great self-denial, he not only shunned all marks of honor, but even desired to be despised and corrected by every one, and thus rendered thanks to God for every offence and

contempt he met with. Except sin, nothing worse can befall a pious Christian, and especially a priest, than to be accused of sinning against chastity; and yet this happened to St. Louis Bertrand. An Indian woman, instigated by her seducer, accused the Saint of being the father of her child, and when finally the accusation was proved to be false, and the judge wished to punish the guilty wretch, Bertrand did all in his power to have her pardoned, and replied to those who blamed his forbearance: "If strict justice were meted to all where would patience be? He who follows the admonition of Christ will be no loser even in this world, and whilst the arrogant and haughty think to protect themselves by violence, the follower of Christ finds his protection in God." Once preaching in Albeyda, St. Louis denounced a certain vice, and a nobleman, feeling offended, threatened him with death unless he publicly recalled his words. St. Louis simply remarked that he would be happy to die for the truth. The next day the nobleman drew a pistol on the Saint, but when St. Louis made the sign of the cross towards the weapon, the assassin saw only a crucifix instead of a pistol in his hand, and throwing himself at the feet of the Saint, begged his pardon.

St. Bertrand had much suffering and affliction towards the end of his life; but with a heart full of true humility and Christian submission he prayed with St. Augustine while suffering the most horrible pains: "O Lord, burn, cut, spare me not now, that Thou mayest spare me hereafter. Increase my pain, but increase also my power of patience." The miracles wrought at the grave of this Saint, and by his intercession, manifested how richly God rewards him, who out of humility shuns the honors of the world.

ST. FRANCIS BORGIA.

(October 10.)

"Contemplation of Death"

Francis Borgia, Duke of Gandia, though living at the court of the Emperor Charles V., and exposed to its temptations and seductions, always manifested a desire to serve Christ. Seeking the society of the wise and pious, and avoiding that of the fickle and thoughtless, he strengthened himself by reading pious books.

Amid a general festivity at Toledo, the Empress Isabella fell sick, and in a few days died. It devolved on the Duke of Borgia, as one of the highest grandees, to accompany the remains of the empress to Granada, the burial place of the Spanish kings. By the express wish of the empress her body had not been

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embalmed, and on its arrival at Granada, the coffin, when opened, was such a mass of corruption that all present shrunk back with horror and fright. Francis alone conquered the weakness of nature, and, bending over the corpse, he listened to the silent sermon it preached to him in that moment. For ten years he had daily seen the empress, who was distinguished for her beauty, and during the seven days he had not seen her, she had been changed into the most horrible object that could be offered to the sight of man. He then asked himself: "Where is now that majesty, loveliness, and grace? Where are now those eyes, a look of which made so many happy but a very short time ago?"

Thus the sight and contemplation of death and corruption called forth in Francis the resolution to aspire henceforth only after that which is imperishable, and having returned to Toledo, he expressed to the emperor his wish to retire from the court. The emperor, however, could not yet spare the services of such a faithful servant, and appointed him governor of Catalonia. Francis fulfilled the duties of that important and difficult office, but his life became still more devout, mortified, and holy. Yet he was designed to reach a still higher degree of perfection.

After the death of his wife, having sought the counsel of God and true advisers, he entered the Society of Jesus, but took the vows in secret; for he thought it best to remain for a few years longer in his dukedom. From that time his piety, self-denial, and watchfulness always increased, and whilst submitting with the strictest obedience to the rules of his order, he fulfilled at the same time the duties of a Christian parent, master, and ruler, providing most carefully for the Christian education of his children, setting them an example in his own person, and looking with not less care after the physical and spiritual welfare of his servants and subjects.

When Borgia could leave the administration of the dukedom in the hands of his son, he appeared publicly as a member of the order, and was ordained, celebrating his first Mass in the room where St. Ignatius was born and converted. People even then called him the saintly duke. In his humility he refused the dignity of a Cardinal, twice offered to him by the Pope, and preferred to live ir a small house of his order, striving to follow as closely as possible in the footsteps of his Lord and Master. But whilst he here took upon himself the most menial services, and endeavored to be despised by the world, the people, wherever he appeared with his sack for the purpose of begging, collected in crowds, fell on their knees, asked his blessing, and were anxious to kiss his hands and garments.

So brilliant a light, however, was not designed for such a limited sphere, and St. Ignatius announced to him in writing that he had not been called by God to seek solitude, and live according to his pious inclination, but to imitate His Son, and save many. His powerful sermons, his example and counsel, induced many young men of noble birth, great talents and great learning to

renounce the turmoil of the world, and enter the order. Many, too, both high and low, were snatched from the grasp of sin and vice, and brought from the brink of hell to the gate of heaven.

Some time after St. Francis was chosen General of the Society of Jesus, a dignity and position that caused much mortification to his humility, but the greatest joy to the order. His administration was most beneficial to the Catholic Church.

No thought is more salutary than that of death, and none should be more frequently the matter of a Christian's meditation. It is certain, but we shut our eyes to it. Yet all around us tells us of death. Look then calmly at it, and prepare yourself frequently for that awful hour, happy if when the Lord comes he find you thus watching.

ST. TARACHUS.

(October 11.)

"Old Age."

St. Tarachus, who with two other Christians, Probus and Andronicus, died the death of a martyr at the end of the third century, was born in the city of Claudiopolis in Isauria. He was a Roman citizen, had served in the army, and in his old age, accused of being a Christian, he was brought before the tribunal of the Governor Maximus at Tarsus. Neither flatteries, promises, threats, nor the most terrible tortures that human cruelty could devise, shook the firmness of this Roman Christian. After having in vain burned his head, cut out his tongue, and cut off his ears; after having broken his jaws, lacerated his whole body, and filled the wounds with boiling oil, melted lead, vinegar, and mustard, Maximus ordered the martyr to be led to the arena in company with Probus and Andronicus, who had likewise undergone the rack.

"When we saw them approaching," thus we read in the Acts, "carried by the soldiers (for they could not walk on account of their wounds), we drew near, and prayed, shedding many tears. When the Saints were thrown in the midst of the arena, many of the people began to murmur and inveigh at the injustice of the sentence, and some of them even left the arena, exclaiming against Maximus. Yet the beasts that had been let loose touched not the Saints, and Maximus in his anger had the keepers chastised, and ordered them to set loose the wildest beasts against the Christians. They sent forth then a most ferocious bear, which was said to have already killed three men that same day. The

beast passed the three Saints without any sign of fierceness, stretched himself down before one of them, and licked his wounds. By order of the enraged Maximus the bear was killed, and a lioness let loose. Her roaring filled the spectators with fear and trembling, but perceiving the three mutilated martyrs, she approached Tarachus, and lay down at his feet. Maximus ordered the keepers to rouse her; she became angry, and with a loud roar rushed towards the barriers, and the door of her cage had to be opened in order to induce her to leave the arena. Maximus, whose passion only increased the more, then ordered the martyrs to be beheaded, and his command was instantly executed."

St. Tarachus was sixty-five years old, when he with astonishing courage and firmness defied all threats, and bore the most cruel torments; indeed, no young hero has ever displayed greater bravery on the battle-field than did this old man in the long hours of his martyrdom. The soul of the worldly man suffers from the approach of old age; his memory and power of reasoning grow weaker, ill temper and caprice take the place of serenity, and sometimes the vices of avarice, moroseness, and even envy appear. And yet it is in the power of man to keep his soul always young and fresh by uniting it always more intimately with Him who never grows old. The mind and the body may lose their power and strength, and the soul may no longer possess the readiness and swiftness of thought belonging to youth, but its love of God, and its joy and trust in Him will never decrease until death frees it from the fetters of the body, and until it meets Him for whom it longed while here below.

ST. SERAPHINO.

(October 12.)

"Venial Sin."

THE mother of this Saint was a pious woman of very humble birth, but who endeavored to implant true piety in the heart of her son. From his earliest youth his greatest delight was to hear Mass and sermons, recite the rosary, and pray when alone. He became a shepherd, but after his father's death he had to return home, and assist his brother, a mason. As his brother was of a most excitable disposition, Seraphino was for the most trifling matter either beaten or insulted. Once a rich man of an adjoining city, who generally received the Capuchins of the neighborhood in his house, determined to erect a convent, and he engaged Seraphino and his brother to build it. Louisa, the

daughter of the rich man, remarked with astonishment that Seraphino fasted and prayed very strictly, and while she was once reading aloud about the last judgment, Seraphino, who could not read, listened with all possible attention, and suddenly exclaimed: "O Louisa, what shall we do if the judgment of the Lord is so severe? Would it not be best to become a hermit?" "A hermit," replied Louisa, "why not become a Capuchin?"

The words were not lost upon him. At the age of seventeen, he entered the order at Ascoli, and led a most austere life, by which he made his body subject to his spirit. He thus obtained the special grace of never having to combat against impure desires; but he took the precaution never to look a woman in the face. He endeavored at the same time to destroy the least sign of pride, but hungered and thirsted after humility. Nature had not endowed him with any aptness, and as a lay-brother had to perform different kinds of labor, he showed himself so slow and awkward that his superiors reproached and punished him for it, but he endured it all most patiently. Thus he lived for thirty years, so that he could be justly called a martyr of patience.

Seraphino guarded himself against venial sins. Once a noble lady tried to persuade him to utter a slight falsehood, as it was only a venial sin; but Seraphino replied, saying: "Do you consider it to be of so little importance? If you offered me the whole world as the price of a falsehood, I would not accept it. Do you regard it as a trifle if God is insulted even by a venial sin, if the Holy Ghost is offended, and charity weakened? If only one spark of the love of God remains in our heart, it would be impossible for us to offend God even with a venial sin."

This simple man, who could not even read, possessed nevertheless the most profound wisdom, for he feared sin, and loved God. When seventy years old, he fell sick, and as he desired to receive the last Sacraments, they were refused him, as none of the friars believed him to be dying. He then rose in his bed, and prayed: "My Lord Jesus, do Thou speak, for no one will believe me!" He had hardly uttered these words, when the signs of approaching death appeared; he then received the last Sacraments, and died peaceably in the Lord.

The guardian would not allow the bells to be tolled, but the children even ran through the streets, crying out aloud that the holy man had died; all ran to the convent, the merchants closed their stores, and the city seemed to have met with some calamity; the authorities sent ten men to watch over the body, as it was exposed in the church, but all rushed to the corpse, either to kiss him or to obtain some relic. Many miracles were performed on his grave, so that the voice of the people was united with the judgment of God. Seraphino was canonized by Pope Clement XIII.

ST. THEOPHILUS.

(October 13.)

Purity of Faith."

St. Theophilus lived in the first century, belonged to a heathen family, and, like the majority of the Romans, manifested no desire to embrace a religion that inculcated the virtues of chastity, humility, and almsgiving. He was at length brought to believe in one God. The Christians welcomed him with joy, for his great intellect and learning gave them reason to hope that he would be a valiant defender of the faith, nor were they deceived. Despising the world, and aspiring only after heaven, esteeming the disgrace of the cross more than the perishable honors of this life, he cared little that his former friends had now become his enemies. He never shrank from maintaining the truth and authority of the Catholic Church, so that Autolicus, one of his most learned opponents, became convinced of his errors, and was gained over to Christ. At that time, 170 years after Christ, the Bishop of Antioch died, and Theophilus was chosen to succeed him. To a Bishop in those days of the Church might well be applied the words of the Apostle: "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (1 Timothy 3 : 1.) For whoever accepted the office, took upon himself a heavy cross, and was almost certain to die a martyr. Notwithstanding all this, Theophilus, for the sake of Christ, and for the welfare of the afflicted Church, consented to become the Bishop of Antioch, and he made it his duty to preserve in all its integrity the faith handed down by the Apostles. He employed his time and all the treasures of his vast learning in refuting and trying to eradicate the heresies which at that time threatened the purity of the Church, as for instance the heresy of Marcion, who claimed the existence of a power higher than that which created the world, and of Hermogenes, who believed in the pre-existence of matter.

A great many of the Saints were distinguished for their love and charity; many called down the mercy of God upon the world by their prayers and penances; a large number of them glorified Christ by dying as martyrs, and St. Theophilus, as we have just read, made it the principal task of his life to search for the truth, to preserve the Christian faith in its purity, and to defend it against the attacks of heretics.

It is the duty of every one to aspire not only after virtue, but also after true and holy faith, and that faith can only be found in the Catholic Church, for she is, as the Apostle says: "The pillar and the ground of truth."

ST. FORTUNATA.

October 14.)

"Desire for Death."

DURING the persecutions of the Christians, caused by the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian, Urban, the cruel governor of Cæsarea, in Palestine, the native place of St. Fortunata, had imprisoned many Christians, among whom were Carpone, Evachrist, and Priscian, three brothers of St. Fortunata. The pious virgin did all in her power to comfort the Christians who were confined in prison, but was at last denounced, and summoned before Urban. She confessed that she was a Christian, and firmly refused to worship the idols. Fortunata despised all the offers of the governor for the sake of the heavenly bridegroom she had chosen, and Urban sent her to a dungeon.

Her pagan mother, informed of the danger which threatened her daughter, hastened to the prison, and sought by her tears and marks of tenderness to persuade her daughter to renounce Christ, and yield to the wishes of the governor. Fortunata was deeply touched, but she overcame the love of the flesh by the love of the spirit, and entreating her mother to become a Christian, she told her not to weep but to rejoice at the approaching martyrdom of her daughter.

Soon after the pious virgin was brought again into the presence of Urban. By his order she was then deprived of her beautiful hair, and, thus disgraced, led through the streets of the city; but Fortunata looked up to God, and cared little for the mockeries of the wicked. The judge then sentenced her to be sawed in two; but the executioners labored in vain, for they found themselves powerless to injure her body. This miracle only increased the passion of the cruel tyrant, and ordering the virgin to be brought into the arena, a lion, bear, and leopard were let loose upon her, but she implored Christ in the depth of her heart, and the wild beasts suddenly lost their ferocity, and approached her to lick her hands and feet. At this sight the spectators rose, and exclaimed aloud: "There is a God of the Christians who created heaven and earth; there is a Lord Jesus Christ whom this blessed maiden proclaims!" Hereupon the barbarian had her ankles nailed together; but as this torture failed to make the virgin waver in her faith, he ordered the executioner to behead her. Fortunata, full of joy at being allowed to die for her faith, praised and blessed the name of Jesus, who had taught her to renounce the world, and assisted her in her struggle, and imploring God the Father to free her without delay from the burden of her body, and to receive her into His presence, the executioner was enabled to execute the sentence.

ST. TERESA.

(October 15.)

"The Eight Beatitudes."

THE Lives of the Saints are the most beautiful illustrations of the Bible. St. Teresa, who lived three hundred years ago, in Spain, will show how the eight Beatitudes with which our Lord begins His sermon on the mount, were reflected in her.

"*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" Although Teresa belonged to a noble and wealthy family, she joined the order of the bare-footed Carmelite nuns, and made it her principal task to implant the love of poverty in the hearts of all the inmates of the convents she established. Mortification, self-denial, and joy in utter want were the rules she laid down, and most faithfully followed, saying: "True poverty, taken upon ourselves out of love to God, procures us great honors; for thus we strive not to please man, but God. And he who has no need of man, because he desires to be poor, is happy, and has many friends, as I frequently experience."

"*Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land.*" Meekness becomes especially manifest when man meets with much contradiction and resistance. Teresa had many opportunities to display this virtue. When appointed Prioress of the convent of Avila, where one hundred and eighty nuns lived in disregard of all rules, and many in their wicked obstinacy refused to listen to any remonstrance or admonition, Teresa, by her meekness and gentleness, by words and actions full of love, kindness, and humility, succeeded in making the convent again the seat of discipline and true piety, so that even those who shortly before had been most unruly and defiant, burst into tears, and felt most unhappy when she was obliged to leave them in order to take charge of another convent.

"*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*" Teresa had to undergo many bodily afflictions: sickness and pain seldom left her; but though she suffered thus for forty years, she defied heat and cold, rain and snow to perform her duties in establishing new convents. No pain, however, ever deprived her of the comfort she found in intercourse with her Lord and bridegroom, and the greater her pain, the greater was her spiritual comfort. And thus also the happy manner in which she died, her joyful appearance and inspired words in that solemn moment, showed the bliss which had succeeded her long and great sufferings on earth.

"*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall be filled.*" Teresa early began and sought to please God by a Christian life, but at a later period her zeal lost some of its original vigor. The sight of an image of the crucified Saviour, however, made her vividly conscious of her great in-

gratitude and unworthiness, and imploring most ardently the assistance of Him who had come unto this world, and taken upon Himself the cross, not to seek the just, but the sinner, her heart was again encouraged and comforted, and was penetrated with the love of God, and a thirst after justice.

"*Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*" Charity towards her fellow-men, and severity towards herself, were prominent features in the character of St. Teresa, and the day that offered her no opportunity of benefitting another sister, was regarded by her as lost. She nursed and comforted the sick and poor, most zealously labored for the spiritual recovery of such as were attacked by the disease of sin, but hatred and enmity found no room in her Christian heart, so that the Bishop of Avila could say of her: "If any one desires to be loved by Teresa, he has only to injure and offend her." And there was also most strikingly fulfilled in Teresa the divine promise, *that the merciful shall obtain mercy;* for great miracles were worked by her intercession, during her lifetime as well as after her death.

"*Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.*" The purity, simplicity, and innocence of heart, free from every sensual thought, emotion, or feeling were so great in Teresa that we read in the acts of her canonization: "Among all the virtues wherewith God wonderfully adorned her, that of chastity shone as the most perfect." And in consequence of this great purity and cleanness of heart, Teresa was enabled on earth to see God in heavenly visions, and after death her remains emitted a most delicious odor.

"*Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.*" "*Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" Many suffer persecutions, and many imagine that they suffer it for justice's sake, and yet frequently it is only the natural consequence of their quarrelsome temper, pride, and obstinacy. Teresa, because she introduced in her convents rigid rules, was often looked upon as a disobedient, quarrelsome, and obstinate nun; jealousy and passion often opposed and attacked the good she had accomplished and established with so much zeal and trouble. Worldly persons sought to disgrace her, and the visions wherewith God had visibly graced her, were not unfrequently looked upon as a species of madness, or as inspirations of Satan. And still, upheld by the grace of God, Teresa suffered all these persecutions in silence and Christian submission, and the greatest malice, disgrace, slander, misconstruction, or disparagement were never able to embitter the noble soul of this Saint. God counterbalanced and rewarded the sufferings and trials of this faithful and humble servant even in this world with the comfort and peace he granted to her heart, and the perfect success wherewith He crowned the efforts and labors of a Saint, of whose death Pope Gregory XV. says in the act of canonization: "At last the time had come when Teresa was to receive from the hand of God the crown of glory for the many works she had accomplished for His honor. She fell dangerously ill in

Alba, and during the days of her sickness spoke to the sisters in a most wonderful manner of the love of God, always praising and thanking Him that He had made her a member of the Catholic Church. Holding in her hand the image of the Crucified, she ascended to her heavenly home, after she had received with feelings of deepest humility and heavenly love the Viaticum, and the Sacrament of extreme unction. And God manifested by signs and miracles the high degree of glory He had reserved for her in heaven.

BLESSED LEUTGARDIS.

(October 16.)

"The Prayer of the Just."

Blessed Leutgardis was born in the valley of the Kinzig. The house of her parents was often visited by poor monks collecting alms, and Leutgardis, taking to heart what they said of the kingdom of heaven, begged her parents to send her to a convent that she might be instructed in a Christian life, and prepare for the service of her Lord, whose bride she wished to be. Leutgardis was received in the convent of Wolffach, belonging to the third order of St. Francis.

Within the quiet walls of the convent, shielded from the snares of the world, Leutgardis grew up, and became a truly Christian virgin, awaiting with longing, and at last celebrating with joy the day of her spiritual marriage to the beloved Bridegroom she had chosen. She often prayed from the bottom of her heart that the earthly treasure in the possession of her parents might not prevent them from seeking the imperishable goods of heaven, and her prayer was heard, as was also that for her worldly brother, whose heart, after he had been visited with bodily afflictions, turned to God. But though Leutgardis had renounced the world, and devoted herself to Christ, she had undergone in her human weakness many trials and temptations which she could only overcome by mortifying her body, and clinging with all her strength to Him whom she loved above all.

After Leutgardis had lived twenty years in the convent of Wolffach, she went forth, inspired by a divine vision, to establish a convent of her own, and though she was destitute of all means, and met with almost insurmountable obstacles, she at last succeeded, miraculously assisted by the power of her prayer, in attaining her end. A small, and at that time uncultivated valley near

Shenkeagell (on the frontier between Baden and Wurtemberg) was the place shown to her by God, and after the poor convent had been richly endowed by Queen Agnes, the saintly Leutgardis presided over the pious flock she had gathered there for eighteen years, faithfully watching and guiding it to the road she had recognized as leading to heaven. Having lived a life of Christian activity, and undergone much trouble and affliction which she bore with Christian patience and humility, she died in 1347, in the fifty-seventh year of her age.

ST. HEDWIGE.

(October 17.)

"Extravagance in Dress."

HEDWIGE, daughter of Bertold, duke of Carinthia, was the wife of Henry, duke of Silesia, and the model of a truly Christian wife and mother. Though the daughter and wife of a prince, she always appeared simply and plainly dressed, putting to shame many women especially of the higher and wealthier classes, who made it their chief aim to out do others by their extravagance in dressing, and even many of those who, less favored by fortune, could not resist the temptation to indulge in luxury.

No trace of pride, so common with women of her rank, was found in her heart, which, on the contrary, was so pure and humble that she always regarded herself as a sinner, never saw the faults, but always the good qualities of others, and every day, in memory of Christ and His Apostles, entertained thirteen poor persons at her table, waiting on them with the greatest attention, drinking with them out of the same goblet, and eating only what they left. Although as a duchess she was obliged to surround herself with many servants and attendants, she never exhibited signs of anger or impatience and never was heard to use a harsh word, but when she was obliged to reprove, she would only say: "Why have you done so? May God forgive you." And her submission to the will of God was so perfectly Christian that, when the sisters of the convent of Trebnitz, where she spent her later days, burst into tears and loud lamentations at the death of the Duke, her husband, who had been the founder and benefactor of their convent, she exclaimed: "Why do you grieve? Can you oppose or change the will of God? You are wrong my beloved; for the Creator can do with His creature according to His pleasure; we must always receive His dispensations with submission, for we are the work of His hands."

In her love for our Lord, she continually crucified her body by fasting and scourging, and found her greatest comfort in kneeling for hours in the church even during the coldest days of winter, praying with the most intense devotion. And whilst thus praying, her spirit rose heavenward, the happiness of her soul frequently reflected itself in her countenance, and her body appeared to be encircled with light, and carried on high. Nature had endowed Hedwige with a kind and compassionate heart, but her fidelity to Christ, who said: "*Be merciful*," ennobled this natural goodness, and elevated it to the dignity of true Christian charity, which displayed itself in her love of the poor, sick, afflicted, and imprisoned, and in her indefatigable efforts to dispose the heart of the duke her husband to be merciful to his enemies.

It was the will of God to give visible evidence even during the life of this saintly woman, whose heart entirely belonged to Him, of the joys that awaited her in the world to come. For when the time approached when she was to give up her spirit, He sent His messengers to invite her to the feast prepared for those who love Him. St. Mary Magdalene, St. Catharine, St. Thecla, and several other Saints appeared, and spoke to her of her death and future happiness. The apparition of these Saints was witnessed by the godmother of St. Hedwige. Her body, which during her life in consequence of her continual mortification and sickness had become a mere skeleton, assumed after her death a most beautiful color, sending forth a sweet odor, and her cheeks and lips looked as red as a rose. Miraculous cures were worked before the interment of her remains by imploring her intercession, and by touching her body. St. Hedwige is venerated as the patroness of Poland.

FEAST OF ST. LUKE, THE EVANGELIST.

(October 18.)

From Bayerle.

St. Luke, by profession a physician, and also a very skillful painter, was, according to the authority of the holy Fathers, a native of Antioch, the capital of Syria, and before his conversion a gentile. Tradition tells us that he painted several portraits of the Saviour, the most Blessed Virgin, and the Apostles SS. Peter and Paul. Painters venerate him as their patron.

After his conversion he was chosen by St. Paul, through whom he probably obtained the grace of the true faith, as his companion and co-laborer in propa-

gating Christianity, and he accompanied that great man on almost all his missionary travels, sharing his troubles and labors, his sufferings and imprisonment. He left the city of Rome after the death of St. Paul, and, according to tradition, preached the Gospel in Italy, Greece, and Africa, until finally in a city of Asia Minor, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, he died the death of a martyr. In the year 357 his relics with those of the Apostle St. Andrew and St. Timothy were brought to the city of Constantinople.

St. Luke is also the author of the third Gospel, and of the Acts of the Apostles, which he dedicated to Theophilius, a distinguished Christian, and principally for the reason, as he says, that he might know the truth of those words in which he had been instructed. For the important events of the life of Christ had been misrepresented even at that time; to guard the faithful against all deception, and to refute the false accounts of the life of Jesus, he wrote in the year 53, being then with St. Paul in Achaia, his Gospel, containing especially a detailed account of the early life of Jesus, and also many other things which the two first Evangelists had not mentioned at all, or to which they had devoted but a few words. A few years later (in the year 61 or 63) he wrote his Acts of the Apostles which, closely following his Gospel, begin with the ascension of the Lord, and close with the arrival of St. Paul as prisoner in the city of Rome. In doing so it was the aim of the Evangelist to narrate the series of miracles that divine Providence employed in order to found the Christian Church whilst she had to undergo the most cruel persecutions on the part of the Jews and Gentiles, and to give thereby the most irrefragable proof of the real resurrection of Jesus, as also of the truth and divine origin of His teachings. The latter book, therefore, contains by no means a complete history of the Apostles, but only a short narration of the most important events concerning the history of the introduction of the Church of Christ among the Jews, and of her propagation among the nations of the earth, comprising a period of thirty years.

As the Gospel of St. Luke begins with a Jewish sacrifice, during which the Archangel Gabriel announced to Zachary the birth of his son John, this Evangelist is represented with an ox, the symbol of the Jewish sacrifice.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—PS. 138.

"To me thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honorable; their principality is exceedingly strengthened. Lord, thou hast proved me and known me; thou has known my sitting down and my rising up." Glory be to the Father.

PRAYER.

Let the blessed Luke, Thy Evangelist, who in honor of Thy name con-

tinually bore on his body the mortification of the cross, intercede for us, we beseech Thee, O Lord. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—2 Cor. 8 : 16–24.

"And thanks be to God, who hath given the same carefulness for you in the heart of Titus. For indeed he accepted the same exhortation: but being more careful, of his own will he went unto you. We have sent also with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel through all the churches: And not that only, but he was also ordained by the churches companion of our travels, for this grace, which is administered to us by the glory of the Lord, and our determined will: Avoiding this, lest any man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us. For we foresee what may be good not only before God, but also before men. And we have sent with them our brother also, whom we have often proved diligent in many things; but now much more diligent, with much confidence in you. Either for Titus, who is my companion and fellow-laborer towards you, or our brethren, the apostles of the churches, the glory of Christ. Wherefore show ye to them, in the sight of the churches, the evidence of your charity, and of our boasting on your behalf."

Here the Christians of the rich city of Corinth are asked by the Apostle to give liberally for the benefit of the poor Christians of Jerusalem, who had been deprived of their possessions by the enraged Jews. Among those sent to collect such gifts was St. Luke, upon whom the Apostle bestows well-deserved praise.

Gospel as on the *Feast of St. Mark, the Evangelist* (April 25)

ST. VARUS.

(October 19.)

"Unheard Petitions."

AT the time when the decree of Maximian, ordering the persecutions of the Christians, reached Egypt, and many faithful died as martyrs at the stake or by the sword, Varus served with much credit and honor as an officer in one of the Roman legions. He loved Christ with his whole heart, but fearing the tortures and death to which the faithful were exposed, and which the Romans regarded as in the highest degree disgraceful, he was still timid, and shrunk from a public confession of Christ. It hapened, however, that several of the faithful were

arrested in the desert, and thrown into a dungeon; they were to be brought out to worship the idols, or to suffer torture and an infamous death. Varus succeeded in visiting the martyrs in the night, and after he had given them all the comfort in his power, he besought them to pray that he might participate in their firmness, fearing and shrinking as he did from the death that awaited those who were known to be Christians. But the martyrs replied to him: "He who has not sowed cannot expect to reap, and he who fears will not reach perfection, for Christ has said: 'Every one that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven.' (Matt. 10 : 32.) Come then, and make the journey with us to heaven; for thou wilt not again find such companions." And while Varus was still with them, the satellites appeared in the dungeon, and, fettering the prisoners with heavy chains, dragged them before the governor.

Here, in the presence of many people and soldiers, and unshaken by the most terrible threats of the judge, they frankly and fearlessly confessed themselves to be Christians, and after the order of the governor to scourge them had been executed, he said: "I see only six of you; where is the seventh who was especially sought for? And pressing through the crowd of spectators, and stepping before the governor, Varus said: "He has yielded up his spirit in the desert, and made me his heir. Whatever is asked of him I will accomplish; for the heir must pay the debts of him whose estate he has inherited."

Seeing a Roman soldier and officer of high rank boasting before him of being a Christian, the enraged governor uttered the most terrible threats against those who despised the idols, and he ordered Varus to be put to the rack, but as this did not make him yield, he commanded him to be fettered, and scourged by four satellites. But while they scourged him, he said to the martyrs: "Bless your servant, holy fathers, and pray that strength may be given me to be the first to overcome the rage and torture of this wicked man." And they looked heavenward, and said: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who crownest with the diadem of patience those who suffer for Thy sake."

The governor in his blindness and hatred still thought to overcome the firmness of the servants of Christ by devising new tortures, and threatened to inflict the same punishment upon the six Saints if they did not renounce their faith: he had Varus once more put to the rack, and his sides lacerated with sharp irons; and when the executioners for hours tortured the brave Christian without his showing the least sign of yielding, but in union with the other prisoners, praised and thanked God for the sufferings granted to them, the governor exclaimed: "Tear out his entrails, and show them to him!" But Varus said: "Thou, son of Satan, and enemy of all justice, thou hast the power to tear out my entrails, but not to deprive me of my faith." The six Saints were ordered back to the dungeon to be put upon the rack, and when they left the tribunal, Varus called to them in a loud voice: "Remember me, ye holy soldiers of

Christ, I shall no longer answer this wicked man; I go to meet my Lord, rendering you thanks for having procured me life everlasting." And they still continued torturing him for five hours until he yielded up his spirit, and his body was then dragged outside of the city. In the night, however, Cleopatra, a pious woman from Palestine, took away the body, embalmed, and secretly buried it in her house. The rest suffered martyrdom the following day, and their remains were also secretly interred by the Christians.

Some time after, when it was no longer regarded a crime to worship God and His only-begotten Son, Cleopatra returned to Palestine, and taking with her the remains of St. Varus, she buried them in the vault of her ancestors, in her native village Syre, near the mount of Thabor. Many sick and possessed persons, who were brought thither, were miraculously cured, and the vault being much too small for the many pilgrims who came to implore the intercession of the martyr, the pious woman began to build a church over his remains. After its consecration, Cleopatra, who had a son whom she was about to send to the army of the emperor, knelt down before the holy relics, and prayed thus: "I beseech thee, who art adorned with the crown of glory and patience, implore the Lord to grant to my son prosperity in Christ, and the favor of the emperor. I pray thee, remember that I esteemed thee higher than I did all that I loved on earth, more than my husband, son, or earthly treasures." She then prepared a splendid feast for the many Christians who had assembled to participate in the celebration, but her guests had scarcely retired when her son fell suddenly sick, and died that same night in the arms of his mother. In her despair she ran with the body to the temple, and laying it upon the altar, she exclaimed: "O what a reward has this Saint given me for all that I have done! O how cruelly has he paid me for my veneration and sacrifices! Give me back my only child, my only comfort, or I will kill myself. Varus, pray thy Lord to give me back my son, for He has already resuscitated many of the dead. Restore my child to life, and take mine instead of his!" And the whole church wept with the bereaved and wretched mother; for her son had been a most beautiful and promising boy, and they imagined that she had not received the reward that she had merited.

We see here a pious mother whose heart was filled with the veneration of a Saint, whose remains she had taken from the place of punishment at the peril of her own life, whose intercession for the welfare of her only son she implored as the only reward for her troubles and sacrifices, and who had scarcely ceased to ask his intercession in the new temple erected by her for his veneration, when she sees her son attacked with fever, and expire in her arms. If the prayer rising to heaven from such a heart is not heard, *must we not lose all confidence in prayer?* What follows will answer the question.

The priests could not comfort Cleopatra, and it was midnight before she fell asleep, exhausted with her grief, when, behold! St. Varus appeared to her,

leading her son by the hand, both clad in garments of light, and each of them wearing a diadem of bright stars. The heart of Cleopatra was seized with fear, and she fell on her knees and prayed; but the martyr addressed her thus: "Why dost thou exclaim against me as if I had wronged, and returned thee evil for good? I know all thou hast done for me, and also the cause of thy asking my intercession. I interceded for thee, and the Lord granted my prayer not, however, to admit thy son in the army of the emperor, but in that of heaven. But now take him back if thou desirest." But then the child implored his saintly companion not to send him again from the abode of bliss and the Saints into that of sin and wretchedness, and, turning to his mother, he said: "Can there be a mother who desires to lead back her son from glory to poverty? from light to darkness? And when Cleopatra fervently besought the Saint to take her with him to heaven in order not to be separated from her only son, St. Varus replied: "Though thou remainest still on earth, thou wilt be with us in heaven. Place our remains together in the same coffin. Peace and comfort be with thee!"

Cleopatra told the people of the blessed vision; she buried her child with the remains of St. Varus, and she said to all who had come to the funeral: "I will prepare a great feast, because my son has been received into the army of heaven; I saw him, and my soul rejoiced and rendered thanks to God." After that she withdrew from the world, and served God in the temple that contained the remains of St. Varus and her son, and when seven years later she yielded up her spirit, she was entombed by their side.

Thus we see that many fervent prayers are offered up, and yet are not heard, because God does not always grant what is asked of Him, but grants what is infinitely better. God's wisdom is immeasurably greater than our short-sighted judgment, and His goodness knows what is best for us.

ST. JOHN KANTI.

(October 20.)

"Uprightness."

When a student at the university of Cracow, four hundred years ago, St. John was distinguished for his talents, industry, piety, and great modesty. His later labors for the cause of Christ, as priest and professor in the city of Cracow, were crowned with the most blessed success. He adopted as the rule of his conduct the saying of St. Ambrose: "It is more important to lead a good life than

to be learned, for a pious man, although ignorant, is pleasing to God, whereas much learning without a corresponding good life never tends to perfection." He always endeavored to illustrate by his own example the doctrine that he taught. Once while on a journey to Rome, which he made on foot and alone, he was attacked by robbers who threatened to kill him if he did not give them all the valuable things he had about him, but they had scarcely left, when he remembered that he had some gold concealed in his habit, and running after them, he handed them the money. Even the hearts of robbers could not resist such honesty and innocence, and casting themselves at the feet of the holy man, they gave him back all that they had taken, and implored his forgiveness.

Thus we see that the uprightness and simplicity of St. John turned to his own advantage, a result which, although denied by the wicked, is frequently seen in the world. He who on all occasions strives to do what is right before God, unmindful of the opinion of others, may be looked upon as foolish and wanting in sagacity, but he will always possess the regard of good men and surely receive the blessing of heaven.

To simplicity and innocence of heart St. John united fidelity to duty, and a strict watchfulness over himself. That he might be always reminded of the necessity of showing mercy both as priest and professor, he wrote on the walls of his room the following lines: "Be careful not to wound the feelings of another, for it is difficult to effect a reconciliation. Be careful not to slander any one, for it is unpleasant to retract." As Pastor of the parish of Ilkush, he labored zealously for the spiritual welfare of his flock, but so great was the tenderness of his conscience that he regarded the care of souls as too dangerous a task, and he, therefore, resumed his duties as professor in the university.

He devoted the greater part of his salary to charitable purposes, and he went on foot to Jerusalem, and several times to Rome, in order, as he said, to atone by the hardships of his journeys for the sins he had committed, and to escape the punishment that awaited him in purgatory. In the decree which announced the canonization of St. John Kanti, Pope Clement XIII. says: "It was not the will of God that His Church should remain without defence; thousands of shields are displayed on her walls as in a fortress. Those shields are the teachers of the Church, who, seated in the chairs of wisdom, expound with zeal and care faith and moral law, or who in lectures sow the seed of eternal bliss in the hearts of their pupils, and by the purity of their life lead them to the knowledge of truth. In order to be to the Church as a firm shield against the gates of hell, science is not sufficient, if it is not united with holiness; the union of both increases their mutual power and dignity."

ST. HILARION.

(October 21.)

"Earthly Goods."

HILARION, born of heathen parents, embraced the truth of Christ while studying in the city of Alexandria. From that moment he found no more delight in pleasures of the world, and having heard of St. Anthony, he sought him in the desert to prepare himself for a hermit's life. Having divided his whole inheritance between his brothers and the poor, he renounced the world, and repaired to the desert, leading there a life of the most rigid mortification. Once robbers came near his wretched hut, and, to try him, asked: "What would you do if robbers were to attack you?" "A penniless man fears no thief," was Hilarion's reply. "But they might kill you," said the robbers. "That might be," was his reply, "but being ready to die I fear them not." Impressed by the holiness of the Saint, the criminals confessed their sinful life, and promised to amend.

The great miracles worked by the intercession of the pious hermit, caused many people in distress and affliction to implore his powerful assistance, among whom was also an officer belonging to the body-guard of the Emperor Constantine, whom the Saint freed from a wicked spirit that had for a long time tormented the unhappy man. The officer in the simplicity of his heart offered to Hilarion a present of ten pounds of gold; but the latter, handing a barley-loaf to the soldier, said: "Those who live on such food, place no value on gold."

We see that Hilarion faithfully followed the advice given by the Saviour to the rich youth, but which appeared too difficult to the latter, and that he thereby obtained true and cheerful freedom of spirit. Every heart not chained by the fetters of Mammon, whose sceptre is so powerful in the world, is saved from numberless troubles, trials and temptations. How very often are earthly goods the cause of enmity between relatives and friends, how often do they stand between man and his Creator, how often do they drive sleep and rest from the couch of man, and fill and darken his soul with the gloom of care. Though circumstances may oblige you, O Christian, to strive for earthly goods, take heed that they do not arrest the growth of holiness in your heart; always remember that they are not the aim of your life. Use them in a Christian spirit, bear their loss with Christian patience and cheerfulness, accustom yourself and all connected with you to be satisfied with little, and you will obtain the true independence of spirit of St. Hilarion, and never be a wretched and helpless slave of Mammon.

In consequence of the many miracles wrought by the divine grace bestowed upon St. Hilarion, the number of persons who came to be relieved and com-

forted daily increased, and he was, therefore, obliged to resort to a desert near the city of Aphrodite, to enable himself to serve God in solitude. For three years it had not rained in that region, but the powerful prayer of this poor hermit opened the flood-gates of heaven, and thousands were saved from starvation and famine. The veneration of the people was too great a trial for this humble servant of Christ, and he embarked for Sicily, hoping there to live in perfect seclusion. Yet here also the presence of the holy man became soon known by miracles wrought through his intercession, and here also he refused all gifts, remembering the saying of Christ: "Freely you have received, freely give." (Matt. 10 : 8.)

The same cause that brought him to Sicily, made him again leave that country, and go to Dalmatia; but having by his miracles become also there the benefactor of the people, he fled again from their general veneration, and sailed for the island of Cyprus. And here at last he found seclusion in a remote and almost inaccessible valley, shut in by rugged mountains. Five years were granted him to serve God undisturbed by the world. Only his faithful disciple Hesychius saw him sometimes in his solitude, and to him he left all his earthly treasures, his Gospel, which he had written with his own hand when still very young, and his old habit. At the moment of his death he said: "Go, my soul, why dost thou fear? Go, why dost thou delay? For seventy years thou hast served Christ, and art thou now afraid of death?" With these words he yielded his spirit.

What a struggle to leave the mortal body must the soul of that man have who has regarded earthly riches as his highest good! What fear must shake the soul that never earnestly served God on earth!

ST. AGATHO.

(October 22.)

"Sentences of Wisdom."

We still possess many remarkable sayings of St. Agatho, who led a life of mortification in the desert of Scete. They were collected and handed down by his disciples, and the Christian wisdom they contain, has always afforded much instruction. We will give a few extracts for the edification of our readers.

Agatho is said to have carried for three years a stone in his mouth until he had perfectly learned to control his tongue.

To a brother who asked to be advised how to behave towards the brethren,

he said: "As on the first day of thy joining them, so during thy whole life show thyself humble and modest; for want of restraint is the source of all passions."

A brother once remarked to him: "Father, the desires and passions will never leave me." And Agatho replied: "The fuel that nourishes them is in thee; act always in opposition to them, and they will leave thee."

He used to say: "In living together with other persons be like a marble column—a stone that feels no anger when insulted, nor pride when praised. If an angry man even raised the dead, he could not please God, because of his passion." The virtue of humility is in the highest degree beneficial to the soul. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ suffered in patience so as to be to us an example of humility, yet the reproach of being a heretic I must repel, because heresy is separation from God and union with hell."

He frequently exhorted his disciples, saying: "Never strive for anything that thou wouldst not willingly give if asked for; else thou wouldst violate the command of the Lord: 'Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away.'" (Matt. 5:42.)

The brethren once asked him: "Father, which is the most difficult exercise in religious life?" And he replied: "To pray as we should, for the wicked spirits continually strive to disturb man when praying, knowing that no other religious exercise is so powerful against them."

When Agatho perceived anything wrong in others, and felt tempted to judge them, he said to himself: "Agatho, do not do so," and he then began to search his own heart.

Being asked by a brother how to guard against sensual desires, he replied: "Go and confess thy weakness before God and ask His assistance, and thou wilt be comforted."

As he was himself very scrupulous, he used to say: "Without a great deal of watchfulness man will not progress even in a single virtue."

He is reported to have said: "If I could find a leper, and be able to give him my sound body for his diseased one, I would do so, for that is perfect love."

When the hour of his death had come, he lay three days as if in a trance, so that at last the brethren touched him, and said: "Father Agatho, where art thou?" And he replied: "I stand before the tribunal of God." "Art thou afraid?" they asked. And he answered: "I have always tried to keep the commandments; but I am a man, and how can I know if my works have pleased God?" The brethren then asked: "Dost thou not trust in thy works?" "I have no confidence in them," was the reply of the saintly hermit, "when I have to appear before God." And when he saw that they wished to ask him several other things, he continued: "Be charitable, and speak no more to me, for I am occupied." His death was happy, and his appearance after he yielded up his spirit, was that of one who had met beloved friends.

ST. JOHN CAPISTRAN.

(October 23.)

"War."

JOHN BAPTIST, called Capistran after the name of his native city in the kingdom of Naples, enjoyed a great reputation as a jurist, and when not yet thirty years old, the king of Sicily appointed him governor of a large part of his dominions, in which high position he showed himself a faithful servant of his master, a righteous judge, and a true benefactor of the people entrusted to his care. Once while endeavoring, by command of the king, to settle a dispute concerning certain boundaries, he was seized by the opposing party, insulted, and imprisoned. Disappointed in his hope of being assisted and liberated by the king, whom he had so faithfully served, he tried to escape, but was recaptured, and even more cruelly treated. But what from a worldly point of view seemed a misfortune, proved to be of great spiritual advantage; for in the dungeon dawned upon him the eternal light of the knowledge and love of God. Inspired by the resolution of renouncing the world, and joining the Franciscans, he procured his release by paying a large ransom, divided his property among the poor, and went to Perugia to enter the Franciscan convent.

The man who but a short time before had been envied by the world as the favorite of a king, had now to undergo many hard trials in order to prove the earnestness of his sudden resolution—trials that gave him sufficient opportunity to display the truly Christian spirit—and he was soon found worthy to be instructed by St. Bernardine (see May 20) in the science of theology.

After his ordination, St. John Capistran was appointed to preach, and the success that crowned his labors was so great that hundreds of young men gave up the world, and devoted themselves to the cause of Christ; numberless women were saved from the snares and vanity of the world, and even cities, on the point of waging war against each other, were reconciled by his words of peace and love. This power he obtained by the holiness, purity, abstemiousness, humility, and watchfulness of his life; he practiced what he taught; he was so humble that he ascribed the miracles worked by him to the merits of St. Bernardine, his master, and refused the office of Bishop offered him by the Pope.

At that time (1450) Germany and Hungary suffered much in consequence of the heresies that had sprung up there, especially from that of Huss; and the Turks prepared to renew their invasion. At the request of the Emperor Frederic, Pope Nicholas sent Capistran to Germany to protect that country from its enemies within and without, and the Lord was with him, and blessed his labors, manifesting His satisfaction with his servant by many miracles worked there by his instrumentality. In Moravia thousands of Hussites were led back to the true

Church by the power of his word, and the success of his Apostolic labors in the cities of Germany, especially in Nuremberg, Magdeburg, and Breslau were most miraculous. From Germany St. John Capistran went to Poland, where this poor, old, barefooted and bareheaded Franciscan friar, a mere skeleton in consequence of his many labors and self-denials, was received by the king and the highest dignitaries of the kingdom with the greatest pomp and manifestations of honor and joy. His missionary labors were here also attended by many miracles and numberless benefits to that country.

But the Turks had in the mean time seized the Christian city of Constantinople, and now threatened Hungary and Germany with invasion and ruin. At the urgent request of the rulers and princes of Germany and Hungary, St. John Capistran, while in Hungary, went from city to city, and from village to village, inspiring the Christians to rise in defence of the Church of Christ, and within five months over sixty thousand warriors had been marked by him with the cross, and were ready to resist the arch-foe of Christianity.

The sultan with his victorious army of four hundred thousand Turks had already arrived before the fortress of Belgrade, and its brave commander looked upon the place as lost, being no longer able to resist the enemy who were about entering the city, when suddenly the army of the crusaders appeared, at the head of which marched St. John Capistran, carrying a cross, and with the battle-cry of "Jesus! Jesus!" struck fear and terror into the ranks of the Turks. The besieged Christians, inspired with new courage, rushed upon the enemy, and put them to flight. The number of the killed on the part of the Turks was greater than that of the whole Christian army, and the miracle of the victory is clearly seen by the fact that the Turkish army was five times larger than that of the Christians.

We see then by the example of St. John Capistran that it is sometimes a holy duty, and a work pleasing to God, to engage in war, and this is especially the case, if we fight against enemies who strive to effect the ruin of Christianity or the Catholic Church, or if we are called upon to defend our native country; for he who fights for such a just cause, acts according to the words of St. John the Apostle: "In this we have known the charity of God, because he hath laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." And if we are unable to serve as soldiers, it is at least our duty to support the cause by our prayers and contributions, and by taking care of the sick and wounded.

With the glorious victory of Belgrade God crowned the labors of His faithful servant here on earth; for shortly after St. John Capistran yielded up his spirit in Villoch, whither the king of Hungary, accompanied by princes and lords, had gone for the last time to kiss the hand of the benefactor of his kingdom, exclaiming: "O my poor kingdom, what shall we now do without our holy father! This man has been of greater assistance than many thousand warriors."

BLESSED ARMELLE.

(October 24.)

"Love of God."

ARMELLE, the shepherdess, who lived nearly two hundred years ago, loved even in her youth to be alone, and to praise and thank God. The heart of the pious child was deeply touched by the wounds she had seen on an image of Christ, and she bore suffering and want willingly to benefit any poor soul in purgatory, and for the living also her heart was filled with love.

Armelle was twenty years old when she left her native village to enter the service of a benevolent woman who lived in the town of Ploermel. She soon gained the confidence of her mistress, who frequently permitted her to attend the services of the church, but after a year's stay in the city, her heart was filled with unaccountable sadness and fear, and having successively served in several families, she at last accepted the offer made her by a nun to live with her married sister. Her new mistress was in the habit of reading aloud in the evening the Lives of the Saints, and sometimes parts of the Passion of Christ, and while listening, Armelle's soul was always filled with greater love and piety. She knew that love for man had caused her Saviour to suffer so much, and it urged her continually to greater penitence, so that she sometimes exclaimed: "O Lord, give me rather death and hell than to see Thee suffer on account of my sinfulness." And she felt only relieved when she had an opportunity to suffer.

But this innocent heart, so full of love and compassion, was also destined to be tempted by Satan. Suddenly she felt her whole nature changed; the fulfilment of her religious duties gave her no longer comfort; despair and dissatisfaction with herself and the whole world surrounded her day and night with the gloom of death, and no longer love, but obedience to the advice of her confessor brought her to the table of the Lord. This unhappy state of her mind lasted for months, when at last the temptations of Satan ceased, and her heart became again the altar of love and peace upon which she offered her whole being to the Lord. Her greatest joy was to think of death; for beyond the grave she saw union with God. The love of God that burnt upon the altar of her heart was so intense that it even affected her bodily health, and caused her to fall sick. Again then the bitter chalice of the cross was offered to her, and she drank it with all the willingness and patience of her loving heart. While consumed with fever, and scarcely able to walk, she was abused, overburdened with work, and even prevented sometimes from attending Mass by her mistress, who pretended to regard her sickness as a pretext for idleness; and though her confessor advised her to leave the service of such a woman, she preferred to remain in order

to bear the cross the Lord had imposed upon her. For several years she followed this "via dolorosa," and when finally her patience and love, her fidelity and devotion had convinced her mistress of the piety of her servant, Armelle determined to leave a service which no longer offered her the opportunity of suffering.

The eldest daughter of her mistress had married, and Armelle lived with her as a servant, when again, after the perfect peace she had enjoyed for a few years, her heart felt the stings of Satan. The love of God, her peace and comfort fled before the demon of impure thoughts and desires that took possession of her. The fear of God alone, not comforting, but tormenting her, preserved her for two years from rushing into the abyss of sin, until at last, as she said herself, God had cleansed her through temptation, as He had once restored with clay the sight to the blind man spoken of in the Gospel, and every thought of her soul, and every feeling of her heart was again clothed in the love of God.

The poor servant girl, who was constantly attaining higher perfection, was not able to read edifying books, but she so much the better understood the edifying sermons preached in all God's creation. The fidelity and attachment of the dog to his master, the gentleness and submission of the lamb, the little chickens seeking protection under the wings of their mother, the pliability of the trees enabling them to resist the attacks of the storm, the liveliness and playfulness of the fishes in the brooks and rivers; Spring with its new life, Summer with its ripening power, Autumn with its rich gifts, Winter with its repose—in fact all the beauty and treasures of nature were as so many texts and sermons that spoke to her of her God and Saviour, and reminded her of the duties of man more powerfully than the most eloquent language of any human preacher The instances of charity and love towards her enemies, mentioned in the biography of Blessed Armelle, prove the truly Christian nature of the love of God that dwelt in her heart even if she had not declared herself: "Though I would have been certain of being numbered among the damned, I would not have ceased for a moment to serve God. I never thought of gaining heaven, nor did I ever do anything for that purpose. My heaven was to please God and to do His will." And her tombstone in the convent of the Ursulines at Vannes, where her remains were buried, justly bears the epitaph: "Here lies the body of Armelle Nicolas, the shepherdess and poor servant, commonly called the good Armelle, and in her heart's unspeakable union with God, the daughter of love. She died on earth, and began to live in heaven on the twenty-fourth day of October, 1671, in the sixty-fifth year of her age. Pray to God for her soul, and follow in her footsteps, that is, love God as she did. Peace be to her ashes. Amen."

ST. GAUDENTIUS.

(October 25.)

"Humility."

DURING his stay in the East, St. Philaster, Bishop of Brescia, in Italy, had died, and as Gaudentius was regarded most worthy to succeed him, he was chosen Bishop. In his great humility, however, he accepted this holy and responsible office only at the urgent request of St. Ambrose, at that time Archbishop of Milan, and because the Bishops in the East threatened him with excommunication in case of refusal.

The humility of St. Gaudentius was so great that he refused to write his sermons, believing that the word of God would only lose in power if proclaimed by such a feeble instrument as he regarded himself; but seeing a certain Benevolus, a very pious nobleman, who had suffered for the sake of the Church, greatly distressed, because sickness had prevented him from listening to the sermons of the Bishop preached during Passion-week, charity conquered humility, and he sent his sermons (still extant) to Benevolus, accompanied by an introductory letter.

St. Gaudentius enshrined the relics of the forty martyrs, which he received at Cæsarea from the nieces of St. Basil, in a church he had built, and which he consecrated in the presence of many Bishops. Later, when St. Chrysostom (see January 27) was persecuted, he took his part most zealously, and was himself while on his journey to the East imprisoned in Thraciæ, and as the party in power could neither by promises nor threats prevail upon him to abandon the just cause, he was forced to return home.

SS. LUCIAN AND MARCIAN.

(October 26.)

"Magicians."

LUCIAN AND MARCIAN were brothers, and originally magicians; but God, who shows mercy to the sinner, and leads such as do not know him to the knowledge of His name, led them from wickedness to righteousness, from the darkness of heathenism to the glorious light of Christianity.

At that time there lived a pious virgin, beautiful in body and soul, a chaste and faithful servant of the Lord, whose heart, filled with the love of God, despised all earthly love. The two magicians were struck with her beauty, and

resorted, as they had often done before, to their diabolical art for the purpose of obtaining power over, and possession of her body. But this time they vainly invoked the aid of the wicked spirits, who said to them: "We could easily assist you in destroying souls that know not God; but we can never gain power over this spotless soul, so entirely devoted to Jesus Christ, who protects her and torments us." Fear and trembling seized the two brothers when they heard the wicked spirits speak thus, and they exclaimed: "This crucified Jesus Christ must be very powerful if He can control the spirits that have always served us, and can frustrate the power of our magic art. We will turn to Him, and fear and venerate Him who may be of greater assistance to us than those whom we have venerated without reason."

The oldest records of the gentile and Christian world speak of witchcraft and the art of necromancy, and mention many instances of that kind, dating from a time when the power of Satan was undoubtedly greater on earth. Many believe that there are still witches and magicians, who have the power of injuring man and beast, and of conjuring up spirits and demons; but as this is no article of faith, a Catholic may believe it or not without offending his conscience.

Great as had been the power of sin over Lucian and Marcian when still in the chains of Satan, so great was the divine grace bestowed upon them after their conversion. They publicly burnt their books of magic, saying to the astonished crowd: "Our former actions were wicked and inspired by the demons. We recognize now that Christ is the true God, and He is now our hope and comfort." After they were baptized, they devoted themselves to a life of penitence, chastity, and abstemiousness, and courageously preached the word of God to the salvation of many. But those whose desires had been formerly gratified by the diabolical art of the two brothers, became enraged, and as the Emperor Decius had ordered a persecution against the Christians, the two brothers were brought before the tribunal of the Governor Sabinus.

The governor in vain used flatteries, promises, and threats to make them again worship the idols, and resume their former occupation; but they remained firm, and, in reply to his threats, said: "We are ready to undergo the torments of the rack, and to be condemned to the darkness and everlasting fire of hell, prepared for Satan and his adherents, rather than to deny the living and true God." Sabinus then sentenced them to be burned alive, and when they were bound to the stake, they offered up thanks, saying: "We praise Thee, O Lord Jesus, that Thou hast freed us, unworthy as we are, from the errors of idolatry, and granted us the privilege of dying gloriously for Thy holy name's sake, and to be received in the communion of the Saints. We praise and glorify Thee, and to Thee we recommend our souls and spirits."

ST. FRUMENTIUS.

(October 27.)

"Durability of the Catholic Church."

MEROPE, a Christian scholar, on his voyage to India, in the third century after Christ, for the purpose of exploring that country, was accompanied by two boys, Frumentius and Edesius, his relatives and pupils. Having satisfied his curiosity, he re-embarked, but the ship being obliged to touch at a certain port of Ethiopia for the purpose of taking in water and provisions, Merope and the whole crew were attacked and murdered by the heathen, who, however, spared the two boys, and presented them to the king of that country.

Here they were most carefully educated, and having become of age, Edesius was appointed royal cupbearer, and Frumentius, who manifested great talent and ability, treasurer and chief officer of state. They enjoyed the highest regard of the king, who gave them at his death permission to return to their native country; but at the earnest solicitation of the queen, who knew them to be faithful, and qualified to manage the affairs of the kingdom during the minority of her sons, they were induced to remain still longer in Ethiopia.

Frumentius was not only a faithful servant of the queen and of the country, but also most devoted and zealous in the service of God. The Christian merchants who visited Ethiopia found in him a powerful protector and great benefactor, who granted them many privileges, and provided them with churches, and he also used all his power and influence to scatter the seed of Christianity throughout that country.

Though it was the queen's desire to retain Edesius and Frumentius in the service of the kingdom, they left the country as soon as the princes had become of age, the former going to his native city, Tyre, where he afterwards entered the service of the Church, and the latter to Alexandria, where at that time St. Athanasius (see May 2) was Bishop. He acquainted the Bishop with all that God had done for the propagation of Christianity in Ethiopia, and requested him to send a pious man there as Bishop. The heart of St. Athanasius was filled with joy while listening to Frumentius; and recognizing the true spirit of God miraculously manifested in the life and actions of the man who had come first to him, though his heart had longed to see his native country and family, he consecrated St. Frumentius as Bishop of Ethiopia, and the latter, sacrificing his love of country and family to the love of God, returned without delay to Ethiopia. And the divine grace was with the new Bishop, supporting and strengthening his teachings with many miracles, so that St. Frumentius became the true Apostle of Ethiopia, leading numberless pagans, whole nations, and

even the princes of that country, named Aizan and Lazan, to the light and love of Christ, so that they were venerated as Saints.

The Church to-day also commemorates the feast of another Ethiopian Saint, that of King Elesbaan, who reigned three hundred years after St. Frumentius. And it was also an Ethiopian who by divine providence was instructed and baptized by Philip, as we read in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and the propagation of Christianity found in no other country less opposition and fewer obstacles to overcome than in Ethiopia. What is now the state of this large country? A part of it, Nubia, has lost the knowledge of Christ, and the rest of it, though still believing in Christ, has lived over a thousand years in heresy and separation from the living and true body, the Catholic Church. And this is not the only country where the true faith has formerly flourished, and sent out Apostolic men and women to Christianize the world, and which was afterwards deprived again of that light. But is this not contrary to the promise of the Lord, who said that He had founded His Church upon a rock, and that the gates of hell should not be able to overcome her? No; for the Lord only promised that the Catholic Church should remain on earth to the end of the world, but not that she should always continue in every land and with every nation where she once had been established. A tree still lives, although here and there a branch has become withered or been cut off. The Saviour even in the time of the Apostles, threatened some churches in Asia with the loss of the light if they did not show themselves faithful and zealous; and, indeed, so it happened later, for at present that country is in the possession of persons who profess the Turkish religion. Therefore we ought not to be without fear, lest our country may be also deprived of the light of the Gospel, if we do not show ourselves worthy of it by a faith living and manifesting itself in love, and by zealously assisting in all that has a tendency to strengthen and promote the Catholic Church in our country.

FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLES SIMON AND JUDE.

(October 28.)

From Bayerle.

St. Simon, the Apostle, called also Simon Cananæus and Zelotes (the latter on account of his great zeal for the honor of the Saviour), to distinguish him from Simon Peter, was, according to tradition, the bridegroom at whose wedding (at Cana) the Saviour worked His first miracle. After the ascension of Jesus he most probably preached the Gospel in Egypt, Mauritania (the north

of Africa), and especially in Persia, in which latter country, as we are told by tradition, he labored and suffered martyrdom together with St. Judas Thaddeus the Apostle.

St. Jude, also called Thaddeus or Lebbeus, to distinguish him from the traitor Judas, was a brother of St. James the younger, and thus related to the Lord. After the ascension of Christ, he labored for the kingdom of heaven in Judea, Samaria, Idumæa, Syria, and especially in Mesopotamia. In the year 62, after his brother James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, had died the death of a martyr, he returned to that city, and was present when St. Simeon, his other brother, was chosen to occupy the Episcopal See of Jerusalem.

We are told also that St. Jude preached the Gospel in Lybia, Africa, where he, as already mentioned above, labored with St. Simon, the Apostle, and finally obtained with him the crown of martyrdom. According to tradition, St. Simon was sawed in two, and St. Jude beheaded; and as both were sacrificed at the same time, the feast of these two Apostles is probably for that reason celebrated on the same day. Their relics were afterwards brought to the city of Rome.

St. Jude is the author of a short Epistle, called forth by the heresies of that time. In it he warns the faithful against these heresies, and exhorts them to lead a Christian life.

Introit of the holy Mass is the same as on the *Feast of St. Luke, the Evangelist* (October 18).

PRAYER.

O God, who, by means of Thy blessed Apostles Simon and Jude, hast granted us to come to the knowledge of Thy name, grant that we may celebrate their eternal glory by making progress in virtues, and improve by this celebration. Through our Lord.

The *Epistle* is the same as on the *Vigil of the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord.*

GOSPEL.—John 15 : 17—25.

"At that time Jesus said to his disciples: These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hate you, know ye that it hath hated me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember my word that I said to you: The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for my name's sake: because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come, and spoken to them, they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth me, hateth my

Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father. But that the word may be fulfilled which is written in their law: They have hated me without cause."

The Church to-day reminds us very appropriately of these words, taken from the discourse of our divine Saviour to His disciples after His last Supper, whereby He first admonishes them to love one another, and then predicts for them the persecutions they would have to suffer from the world, that is on the part of the wicked (though His miracles had given them sufficient opportunity to recognize the truth and divine origin of His teachings), but He also calls their attention to the fact that He Himself, their Lord and Master, had had to undergo the same persecutions prepared by His enemies, and by those of His heavenly Father.

Very important, and most worthy of our special consideration, is that part of to-day's Gospel in which our Lord says that, because the Jews had seen His works, they had no excuse for sin, and for opposing His teachings. We also have no excuse, if we, like the Jews, either partly or entirely reject the teachings of Christ, or oppose them by reason of our perverted thoughts and actions, since we also have sufficient opportunity to inform ourselves of the truth and divine origin of the Christian religion.

BLESSED ANGELUS DE JOYEUSE.

(October 29.)

"Generosity and Magnanimity."

Before the French revolution, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, there was a tombstone in the church of the Capuchins, in Paris, bearing the following epitaph: "Here lies Father Angelus de Joyeuse, late duke and viceroy of Aquitaine, who, in the bloom of his youth, in order to give himself entirely to Christ, renounced all honors and earthly treasures, and joined the order of the poor Capuchins, where he spent his life in serving God with great zeal and humility, and where he died a happy death in God on the twenty-ninth day of October, 1608. To his everlasting memory, his daughter Henrietta Catharine, Duchess of Montpensier, in the grief of her heart has caused this inscription to be engraved on his tombstone."

Henry, as this pious Capuchin was called in the world, was the son of a duke and marshal of France. In his twelfth year he evinced a desire to join

the order of St. Francis in Toulouse, whither he had been sent to be educated; but this being contrary to the worldly designs of his father, he was sent to Paris into an institution set apart for the education of princes. He was finally presented to the king, who was much pleased with the young prince, and he thought that marriage would be the best means of diverting him from his purpose of renouncing the world, and at his request young Henry married Catharine de Vallete, a lady of such great piety and virtue, that by this union her husband was even more strengthened in his Christian purpose.

The union of this pious couple was soon brought to a close by the death of Catharine, who died in her twenty-second year; and as this had been the only tie which held Henry to the world, he now followed the desire of his heart, and joined the order of Capuchins in their convent at Paris, after he had surrendered his little daughter to the care of his mother, and his estates to his brother. The king endeavored in vain to induce Brother Angelus, the name Henry took in religion, to return to his court; and after the heart of the novice had undergone many hard struggles, joy and peace took possession of it. Angelus was soon regarded by the brethren as a model of obedience, patience, humility, mortification, and love of God and man.

While Angelus was most zealously and successfully laboring in the pulpit, his brother, who commanded the Catholics against the Calvinists, fell in battle, near Toulouse. No one was thought more fit to command the Catholic army, and avert the danger threatening the Catholic religion, than was Henry, the former duke and present brother Angelus; but as it was against the rule of his order to bear arms, Pope Clemens VIII., so as to enable him to respond to the hope and confidence of the people, sent a special bull, by virtue of which Angelus was permitted to leave the order of the Capuchins and join that of the Knights of St. John. He had scarcely laid aside his religious habit, and entered upon his duties as commander-in-chief, when the leader of the enemy proposed an armistice of three years, which, by the efforts of St. Angelus, who had gone to Paris to see King Henry, led to the conclusion of peace, in consequence of which, and the great services he had rendered to the country, the king conferred upon him the title of marshal and viceroy of Aquitaine.

The first thought of this great man, who had risen to such high worldly honors, after he saw his country restored to peace, was to return to his poor Capuchin convent; and having received permission of the Pope to do so, he again resumed his labors as a Capuchin preacher with such zeal and love that he was justly called the Apostle of France; and many noble lords and knights, following his example, renounced the world and devoted themselves entirely to the cause of Christ. He was chosen Provincial, and speaking of his visits as such to the convents of his order, his biographer relates many instances illustrating his humility, magnanimity, love, and charity, among which was that of a nobleman, a Calvinist, who treated Angelus with great disrespect and contempt,

refusing him even a night's lodging in his castle; but who on hearing that the poor monk was the former duke and viceroy of Aquitaine, followed him, and begged his pardon most humbly, which Angelus willingly granted, saying that he was not in the least offended, but also admonishing him with earnest words of love to take care of his salvation, an admonition which made the nobleman repent, and return to the true faith, the Catholic religion.

All true children of God possess also the spirit of God; and in order to be of the number of them, we must, like Angelus, show that we bear on us the mark of God, and we exercise magnanimity, generosity, love, and charity towards those who offend, hate, and persecute us.

BLESSED STEPHANIE.

(October 30.)

"Return to the Catholic Church,

STEPHANIE was a gay and lively maiden, but so entangled in the heresy of Calvinism that her heart was filled with contempt and hatred of the Catholic religion. She was in the habit of ridiculing Catholic ceremonies and objects of veneration, and many Catholics see and hear the same thing done at present by many enemies of their religion; but should this incite us to hatred and revenge? Not in the least. We shall also see in the life of Stephanie that the Lord often has mercy on their blindness, and leads them to the acknowledgment of their error.

The procession on Corpus Christi once passed the house of Stephanie, and as if Christ Himself had looked upon her from the monstrance, her soul was suddenly illuminated by a light from heaven, and she at once recognized the entire truth of the Catholic religion, and the errors in which she had lived. Fully determined to enter the Catholic Church, and devote her life to the service of the Lord, whose spirit had so suddenly enlightened her, she acquainted one of her friends, a Catholic, with her sudden change and resolution, and by the advice of that friend she went to the convent of the Ursulines, where she received Christian instruction and assistance.

Stephanie's mother, when informed of the conversion of her daughter, and that she was resolved to renounce her errors, and embrace the truth, used all her influence, and even threats and abuse, to make her abandon her design; but with the asssistance of God the maiden overcame all obstacles, and was at last publicly received into the communion of the Catholic Church, and as a novice in the convent of the Ursulines. The trials she had to undergo during the time of her novitiate, and especially during its first half year, when on account

of the ill-health of her mother she was obliged to return to her father's house, where she was continually surrounded by the enemies of her faith, as well as the trials prescribed by the rules of the order to prove the earnestness and firmness of her resolution of renouncing the world, were not able to make her waver, and only served to increase the love of God that burned upon the altar of her heart. Thenceforth she was a faithful servant of the Lord in affliction and trouble; in joy and woe, she gloried in being despised, and loved her enemies, whom she tried with all the strength of her pious heart to lead to the peace and comfort she had found herself in returning to the truth of the Catholic faith.

After Stephanie was converted, the eyes of her mind saw in the doctrines, sacraments, ceremonies, and beauties of that Church a new life, full of freshness, vigor, and living beauty, like a person coming suddenly from a sandy desert into a fertile and most beautifully cultivated country, or from a filthy habitation into a royal palace. And yet how careless, negligent, and even cold in regard to this religion are not many Catholics who from their earliest childhood have been brought up in, and acquainted with the numberless blessings of their religion! Let us imitate the example of Stephanie and the many other men and women who not until late became convinced of the truth of the Catholic religion, but with so much greater zeal and love strove to repair the time they had spent in error.

Stephanie was but twenty-eight years old when she was attacked by a slow fever, and it was on the thirtieth day of October, in the year 1659, that she died in the peace of God. Her love of God had increased with her bodily affliction, and though she did not succeed in her efforts to convince her parents of the error in which they walked, she persuaded two of her relatives in her native city Gest, to return to the Catholic faith. And now, dear reader, if you are a Catholic, offer up an Our Father, with a sincere and devout heart, that God may lead all the erring back to the Catholic Church; and if you are Protestant, then implore God daily to lead you to a knowledge of the perfect truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

ST. WOLFGANG.

(October 31.)

"Disinterestedness."

Wolfgang and Henry, two youths, who about a thousand years ago studied together in the convent of Reichenau, near lake Constance, became intimate friends. At that time the Bishop of Wurzburg, brother of the young Count Henry, had invited Stephen, a celebrated Italian scholar, to become a professor in Wurzburg, and Henry persuaded his friend to go with him to that city for the purpose of finishing their studies. But Stephen was as haughty and envious as he was learned, and seeing that Wolfgang would soon surpass him in knowledge, he refused to instruct him longer, in consequence of which the young student abandoned all worldly studies, and entirely occupied himself with those of the sacred writings, to which his pious heart had always inclined, and he also resolved to avoid the dangers of the world by joining a monastic order.

Count Henry had been chosen Archbishop of Treves, and Wolfgang could not resist the urgent request of his friend to assist him in the discharge of the difficult and important duties. But though he had yielded to the wish of his friend, the latter could not prevail upon him to accept the high dignity, and he chose as the sphere of his action a professorship in the school connected with the cathedral, where he labored for the welfare of the diocese, and for the instruction of the young, without accepting the pecuniary benefits accruing from his position. The duty of obedience towards the Archbishop also obliged him to submit to being charged with superintending the clergy of Treves, and by his energy, gentle humility, and especially his own Christian example, he soon succeeded in making that body worthy of belonging to the priesthood of Christ.

The death of Archbishop Henry, occurring a few years after his appointment to the Episcopal See, gave a new impulse to the desire of Wolfgang of renouncing the world. The most honorable, brilliant, and advantageous offers from St. Bruno, at that time Archbishop of Cologne, inviting him to his diocese, were unable to divert St. Wolfgang from his purpose; distinctions, power, honors, and large revenues had no attractions for this great Christian, and even the grief of his parents and relatives, who lost in him the only heir of their large estates, failed to make him faithless to his pious determination. He entered the newly founded abbey of Einsiedeln, but despite his great humility, the fame of his godliness, wisdom, and learning soon spread far and near, even from this secluded abode.

The love of God that animated this holy monk, continually urged him to works of love towards man, and with the permission of his Abbot he set out to convert Hungary. His efforts with the inhabitants of this country appeared

for the time to be without success, and when after the course of a year the Bishop of Passaw, to whose diocese Hungary then belonged, recalled the zealous missionary, he had, as it was in some instances the case with the Apostles, only gained the merit of his good will. By the advice of Pilgrin, Bishop of Passaw, the poor Benedictine was chosen Bishop of Ratisbone; but only by the order of his Abbot, to whom he owed obedience, could Wolfgang be induced to accept this office which was very mortifying to his humility; but the discharge of the important and most burdensome duties of which could not be confided to a more faithful and capable man.

To the diocese of Ratisbone belonged at that time the whole country of Bohemia, yielding, indeed, large revenues to the Bishop and clergy of Ratisbone, but very little, and in fact not sufficient spiritual care to the Christians of Bohemia. Wolfgang, therefore, against the will of his Episcopal advisers and his own pecuniary interest, but for the promotion of the Church of God in Bohemia, which with him outweighed all other considerations, separated that country from his Episcopate, and caused the establishment of a new Bishopric in the city of Prague, over which later St. Adalbert presided. He acted similarly with the Benedictine abbey of St. Emmeran of which the Abbotship and large revenues belonged to the Bishop of Ratisbone, in consequence of which the members of the abbey had frequently suffered from want, and, because they were not sufficiently controlled, had lost much of their monastic discipline. In order to elevate the members again to their true calling as followers of Christ, and to restore in the convent the spirit of obedience, discipline, and love, he abandoned all claims to the Abbotship, gave the management and spiritual care of the convent into the hands of an Abbot, and renounced for its benefit all the revenues to which he was entitled, unconcerned about the loss he suffered in his income.

The task of the saintly Bishop of guiding the flock confided to him on the road of salvation, considering the ignorance and unchristian life of so many priests of his diocese, was immense; but with the assistance of his heavenly Father his indefatigable efforts and labors were crowned with success both in reforming his clergy, and promoting true Christianity throughout the country.

Wolfgang had occupied the Episcopal See of Ratisbone but for three years, when he secretly withdrew from the world into a remote and uncultivated valley, surrounded by high mountains, and enclosing a small lake, near which he lived for several years in a small hut, in great self-denial and mortification, imploring God's blessing for his diocese and the Church. The place where the Saint had lived separated from the world, and occupied only with God, was afterwards called St. Wolfgang. It was visited by large crowds of pious pilgrims, and glorified by many miracles worked through his intercession. A hunter discovered the abode of St. Wolfgang, and, urged by the inhabitants of his diocese, who had long mourned the loss of their beloved shepherd, and now longed for his return, he was obliged to enter again upon the duties of his high office.

Great was the joy of the citizens of Ratisbone at the return of their Bishop, and the zeal with which he again began to work for the cause of Christ was soon visible in the good discipline and really Christian life that commenced to be manifested in the convents of the Episcopal capital.

It was the heart-felt wish of the Duke of Bavaria to give his children a truly Christian education, in order to protect them from the errors he had himself committed in his youth, and which he now sincerely regretted. He placed them, therefore, under the care of Bishop Wolfgang, and the blessed result showed the wisdom of his choice; for two of these children, Henry and Gisela, are venerated as Saints, and the two others, Bruno and Brigida, died in the odor of sanctity. We are also told that Wolfgang, in a truly prophetic spirit, gave to these children titles which indicated their future destiny. Thus he used to call Henry king, and he became later king and emperor of Germany; Gisela queen, and she married afterwards the king of Hungary; Brigida Abbess, and she was chosen as such in the convent founded by Wolfgang; and Bruno Bishop, to which holy office he succeeded in Augsburg.

The most prominent feature in the Christian character of St. Wolfgang was disinterestedness, a virtue bearing the fruit of charity, and which finds its greatest delight in benefitting others. The instances which are recorded in the life of St. Wolfgang, serving to illustrate this virtue, for which he was distinguished, are too numerous to be mentioned here, and we can only say that if we wish to imitate this true Christian, whose principal aim it was to benefit others, we must, like him, accustom ourselves to be satisfied with little; for the greater our wants or the more we incline to ostentation, the more are we tempted by, and exposed to the low and contemptible vice of selfishness.

St. Wolfgang had occupied the Episcopal See of Ratisbone for twenty-two years, when he fell dangerously sick on his way to the city of Pupping. At his request he was carried to the church of St. Othmar, laid on the floor before the altar, and there received the holy viaticum. The people came in crowds to the church to witness the last moments of the saintly Bishop; the sacristans, however, tried to turn them out, and close the doors, but the dying Saint said: "Open the doors, and prevent no one from entering, for it is no shame to die; only a wicked life causes disgrace. We must obey this law of nature, and the Lord of life Himself was not ashamed to die naked on the cross for our sins. Let, therefore, every one see in my death what is in wait for him. May the Lord have pity on me, a poor sinner, and on every one who sees me die with a repenting heart, and in fear of his own death."

THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

PENTECOST-CYCLE CONTINUED.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Esther 13 : 9–11.

"ALL things are in thy will, O Lord, and none can resist thy will; for thou hast made all things, heaven and earth, and all things that are under the cope of heaven; thou art Lord of all. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." Glory be to the Father.

On the four last Sundays after Pentecost, the Church, in the different parts of the Mass, points out to us in what consists the hope of the faithful in the great approaching events of the second advent of Christ and the future eternal reward in the kingdom of God. The Christian can only enter by combat into the kingdom of God, and thus obtain the eternal and glorious reward—such are the contents of the liturgical parts of the Mass on this Sunday. The Introit points already to it, for it contains words of the fervent prayer which Mardochai offered up to God for help and deliverance, when through the intrigues of Aman, the Israelites were exposed to the danger of being entirely destroyed; a warning to Christians when combatting against the enemies of their salvation, in their endeavor to obtain heaven, to pray to God, so that with His divine assistance they may gloriously win in the hard struggle for heaven.

PRAYER.

Preserve, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy family, by continued mercy, that by Thy protection they may be free from all adversity, and in good works devoted to Thy name. Through Christ.

EPISTLE.—Eph. 6 : 10–17.

"Brethren: be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of his power. Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God)."

The Apostle first calls our attention in this Epistle to the dangerous enemies of our salvation, against whom we have to combat, and then teaches us how and with what spiritual weapons we can overcome them. For this end he compares the (spiritual) combat of a Christian with that of a soldier, who is armed not only to attack, but also to resist the enemy. But as the combat, so the armor; the combat is a spiritual one, in order to overcome spiritual enemies, to resist spiritual evils, to protect and preserve spiritual goods; the armor must, therefore, be a spiritual one—THE ARMOR OF GOD. "Put ye on the armor of God," says St. Bernard, "not only to resist, but also to combat and conquer Satan; for what do we believe, brethren? The temptations of the enemy annoy us, but not as much as our prayers do him; his malice and cunning injure us, but our simplicity and mercy does him more harm. He cannot endure our humility, he is tormented by our charity, and is tortured by our meekness and obedience."

The Apostle also teaches us that the devil is artful and wily, and hence the more dangerous, so that we need all our moral strength and the assistance of God's grace, in fact the whole spiritual armor in order to resist his snares with success; he does not openly attack man, he does not assume a terrible form, but he comes clothed as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11 : 14), attacking with great cunning the weak points of man's character, the easier to cause his fall. "The devil knows," says St. Gregory, "in whom to enkindle the fire of concupiscence, in whom to excite the vice of gluttony, in whom to plunge the spurs of lust, in whom to infuse the poison of envy; he knows whom he can confound by sadness, deceive by joys, oppress by fear, and lead astray by admiration. He watches our habits, divines our cares, discovers the disposition of our mind, and seeks for an opportunity to inflict injury where he sees that we can be the most easily captivated."

The Apostle then discerns in particular the temptations prepared for us from

without by the evil spirits, in opposition to the temptations from within, against which latter the wily enemy of our salvation exercises his greatest skill, so that his snares only become the more dangerous. We have not to combat against *one* enemy from without, but, according to the Apostle, against a large and well-organized host of enemies, led on by the prince of darkness, who endeavors to attack and destroy the faithful on all sides.

"When," says St. Jerome, in explanation of the words of the Apostle, "one part of the Angels fell, and became devils, they preserved the same rank which they had enjoyed in heaven, so that they might be the stronger to injure man; for as soon as Lucifer fell, it is to be presumed that the Angels belonging to the different choirs fell with him, and that, therefore, the *rulers of the world* and the *spirits of malice* signify an inferior order of spirits, just as the *dominations* and *powers* denote the higher orders of the fallen Angels."

Against these dangerous attacks of the evil spirits we should, as the Apostle says, *have our loins girt about with truth;* the Apostle compares *truth* with a girth, designed to protect the most feeble and vulnerable parts of the body (the loins), because lying is the most dangerous weapon with which the evil spirit assails us. The devil is the origin and father of lies; he deceived our first parents by a lie, and by lying does he still lead to sin those who are not on their guard. To gird ourselves about with truth means, therefore, that we should love truth, that we should endeavor to possess a sincere and honest mind, adhere to the truth, and guard against deception, by which safeguards we are best protected against the attacks of the wily enemy. "Whoever is girt with truth," says St. Chrysostom, "will never weary in the combat, or if he should become fatigued, let him repose upon the truth; for what should tire him? Poverty? By no means; for he will rest upon his true riches, and by poverty itself he will learn what true poverty is. Or shall servitude make him weary? Not at all; for he knows what real servitude is, and in the same manner does he judge sickness, hunger, and other things which usually humble man upon earth."

We should have on the *breast-plate of justice.* By justice is understood the whole extent of the Christian virtues, and such desires and deeds as are necessary to please God and to obtain eternal salvation, of which our Saviour Himself says: "Seek ye, therefore, first the kingdom of God and His justice." (Matt. 6: 33.) This justice, this fullness of the Christian virtues, must cover as it were the whole man, just as the breast-plate covers the body of the soldier, protecting him against the attacks of his enemies. "The breast-plate of justice," says St. Chrysostom, "is the essence of good and holy works; how can Satan overcome a soul protected by humility, patience, obedience, meekness, forgiveness, charity, and other virtues?"

To have *our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace* means that we should walk with alacrity in the way of the Gospel, which brings us true peace.

We should, therefore, follow the narrow path of virtue, without regard to the difficulties and obstacles which we encounter on the road.

We should *take the shield of faith;* for as the shield, when handled with dexterity, protects the soldier against the missiles of the enemy, in the same manner does faith protect the Christian against temptations which, like the fiery darts of Satan, attack him on every side; for by faith does the Christian know the evil into which he would plunge if he should allow himself to be overcome by temptations, and by faith does he feel strengthened to extinguish and suppress the attempts and allurements of the evil one. *The helmet of salvation*, which we have to take unto us, is the hope of eternal happiness; as the helmet protects the head of the soldier, so does hope elevate the heart of the Christian. The devil seeks to draw the spirit of man down to the earth by the love of creatures, but the Christian, animated by the spirit of His Saviour, elevates his heart above the things of this world, and is strengthened by the hope of eternal happiness. In regard to the *word of God*, which the Apostle calls *the sword of the spirit*, he says in another passage: "The word of God is living and effectual, and more penetrating than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also, and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebr. 4 : 12.)

By this powerful spiritual weapon, *the word of God*, our Saviour Himself repelled the temptations of Satan, and in the same manner have the Saints overcome the strongest temptations, by having recourse to the same divine word; and by making use of passages from the holy Scriptures, they have maintained themselves in the hottest combats against the enemies of their salvation. In reference to this St. Jerome relates to us a beautiful and instructive example, taken from the life of St. Paula: "In temptations, she would say: 'The Lord your God trieth you, that it may appear whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul, or no.' (Deuter. 13 : 3.) When feeble and sick, she said: 'Let the weak say: I am strong,' (Joel 3 : 10) and 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels,' (2 Cor. 4 : 7) until 'This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortality shall put on immortality.' (1 Cor. 15 : 53.) And again, 'As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also by Christ doth our comfort abound.' (2 Cor. 1 : 5.) In grief and sadness, she said: 'Why art thou sad, O my soul? And why dost thou disquiet me? Hope in God, for I will give praise to him; the salvation of my countenance and my God.' (Ps. 42 : 5, 6.) In danger, she said: 'If any man will follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' (Mark 8 : 34.) And again: 'Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; for he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall save it.' (Luke 9 : 24.) Upon hearing of the impoverished condition of her family, and of the loss of her entire property, she said: 'What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' (Matt.

16 : 24.) And: 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, as it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done; blessed be the name of the Lord.' (Job 1 : 21.)"

St. Basil gives an excellent instruction on these words of the Apostle, that with the armor of God we should combat against the enemies of our salvation. He says: "A soldier, in the service of a worldly king, is always ready to go where he is sent, and will not dare to excuse himself on account of his wife and children; how much more readily should a soldier of Christ obey the commands of His king! The first, when in battle, wears a brazen helmet; your helmet should be Christ, who is your Head. The first is clothed with a breast-plate to protect himself from being wounded; you should have on the breast-plate which is the belief in Christ. The former attacks his enemies with spear and arrows, you should hurl the words of God at your enemies; the former does not lay aside his arms during the combat in order not to be surprised by the enemy; in the same manner you should be always on your guard, because your enemy is more cunning than is the enemy of the soldier; the former returns to his home when he has won the victory, but you, after having overcome the enemy, shall enter the kingdom of heaven with all the Saints."

GOSPEL.—Matt. 18 : 23–35.

"At that time: Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with pity, let him go, and forgave him the debt. But when that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence; and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant, falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. Now his fellow-servants, seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him: Thou wicked servant! I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother, from your hearts."

The Church, in order to encourage us the more to the spiritual combat, as described in the above Epistle, directs our attention in the Gospel of to-day, to

the promised reward in the next world; and she exhorts us most earnestly to strive for victory in the hardest of all combats, that is against our own hearts, that have become so wicked by cherishing feelings of revenge and enmity against those who have offended us; and she admonishes us to practice the most difficult of all virtues, *love* and *forgiveness* towards our enemies; she teaches us at the same time in the words of eternal truth that thus only will we be able to stand in judgment, and obtain eternal life, that thus only will we find grace and forgiveness before the Almighty, when by conquering our own perverse hearts, we become meek and forgiving to those who have offended us.

To this end is related in the above Gospel the parable of the king who would take an account of his servants, by which our Lord Jesus desired to instruct His disciples and all the faithful on this great obligation to love and forgive their enemies. St. Peter one day came to Christ, and said: "Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" According to the opinion of the Jews it was sufficient to forgive *three times* him who had offended; Peter, therefore, imagined that he was performing a wonderful act, and that he would satisfy even the demands of the Saviour if he forgave his enemies *seven times*. Christ, however, said to him: "I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven," (Matt. 18: 21, 22;) that is, according to the explanation of the holy Fathers, as often as we have been offended. St. Chrysostom says: "I say, if your brother has offended you *seventy times eight*, forgive him, and if a hundred times, or as often as he has offended you, forgive him; for if Christ, finding thousands of sins in you, forgives them all, neither can you refuse forgiveness. The Apostle, therefore, says: 'Forgive one another, if any have a complaint against another; even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also.' (Coloss. 3: 13.)"

Immediately after the above conversation with Peter, our Saviour proposes to His disciples the beautiful parable contained in the Gospel of to-day, in which He defines more clearly the obligation of loving and forgiving our enemies, and all those who offend us, the meaning of which is as follows: Our sins, by which we have offended Almighty God, are, as offences against the infinite and divine Majesty, to be considered as an immense debt, which we are not ourselves able to pay. Our Saviour, therefore, compares them with this immense sum, for ten thousand talents are equal to ten millions of dollars. The offences, however, of others against us, are, when compared to our offences against God, to be considered as a mere trifle; our Saviour compares them to a hundred pence, which are equal to about six or seven dollars. Our all-kind and all-merciful Father in heaven willingly forgives us this immense debt, but only under the condition that with the same willingness we forgive small debts to those who have offended us; if we are, on the contrary, unforgiving to our fellow-creatures, the Lord will deal with us according to the severity of His justice.

How unjustly and wickedly, and at the same time how foolishly do those act,

who, in spite of this express doctrine of Christianity, bear hatred and revenge against those who have offended them, and who neither forgive nor forget the injuries which they received! No crime is oftener committed among men than that of unforgiveness and vindictiveness; there are many who, although they have sinned often and grievously against God, do not forgive the slightest offence of their neighbor; they do not remember that, like the unmerciful and wicked servant of the Gospel, they call down upon themselves the divine justice.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 129.

"IF thou shalt observe iniquities, O Lord, Lord, who shall endure it? for with thee is propitiation, O God of Israel. From the depths I have cried to thee, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice." Glory be to the Father.

The Church reminds us in this Introit of the perishableness of this life, and of the strict account which we have to give on the judgment day, and at the same time she admonishes us, according to the example of the penitent King David, to acknowledge our unworthiness and sinfulness, and to have recourse to the mercy of God, our heavenly Father.

PRAYER.

O God, our refuge and strength, who art the author of mercy, attend to the pious prayers of Thy Church, and grant that what we ask in faith, we may effectually obtain. Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—1 Phil. 1 : 6–11.

"Brethren: We are confident in the Lord Jesus, that he, who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus. As it is meet for me to think this for you all: for that I have you in my heart; and that in my bonds, and in the defence, and confirmation of the Gospel, you are all partakers of my joy. For God is my witness how I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding: that you may approve the better things, that you may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of justice through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

In this Epistle, St. Paul declares that conversion and amendment of life,

which the Apostle expresses by the words *a good work*, is not only begun by the Almighty, but that this good work can only be continued with the assistance of the divine grace, and that, therefore, perseverance in good works, progress in the path of virtue and perfection, can be effected not by the power of man, but only by the assistance of divine grace. In reference to this the Council of Trent says: "Concerning the grace of perseverance, of which it is written: he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved," (Matt. 10 : 24; 24 : 13;) which grace, however, cannot be obtained but from Him, who possesses the power of strengthening him who stands, so that he can persevere, and of raising him who falls—no one should make promises to himself with unconditional certainty, although all men should have the firmest hope in the assistance of God; for the Lord, if we do not neglect to co-operate with His grace, will complete the work He has begun in us, by working in us, "To will and to accomplish." (Phil. 2 : 13.) "Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed, lest he fall," (1 Cor. 10 : 12) and, "let him work out his salvation," (Phil. 2 : 12) with fear and trembling, with working and watching, with alms-giving, prayer, and offerings, with fasting and charity; for knowing that they were regenerated to the hope of glory, but not as yet to glory, they should fear the combat with the flesh, the world and the devil, in which they cannot conquer unless they obey with the grace of God the words of the Apostle, who says: "We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh; for if you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live." (Rom. 8 : 12, 13.) St. Paul then expresses in touching words his great love for the Christians of Philippi, and gives them the assurance that he would pray for them, so that by the grace of God they may grow more and more in the knowledge and practice of good works, and in virtue and perfection, in order to stand in judgment before God—an important testimony certainly in favor of the doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning the efficacy of the intercession of the just and Saints in behalf of their fellow-men.

At the same time we are admonished in this Epistle not only to implore God in humble and fervent prayer, as the giver of all good things, for the assistance of His grace, especially for the grace of perseverance in good works, but also to beg that He may inspire us to make good use of His grace, so that we may obtain true sanctification.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 22 : 15–21.

"At that time: The Pharisees going, consulted among themselves how to ensnare Jesus in his speech. And they sent to him their disciples with the Herodians, saying: Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou dost not regard the person of man. Tell us, therefore, what dost thou think, is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said:

Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites? Show me the coin of the tribute. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: Whose image and inscription is this? They say to him: Cæsar's. Then he saith to them: Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God, the things that are God's."

In the words of this Gospel the Church warns us against a perverted heart, which is the opposite of a Christian soul, and which prevents us from truly loving God and our neighbor, that is, He warns us against *hypocrisy*, which, under the cloak of outward justice, endeavors to conceal its inward depravity and worthlessness; and she exhorts us to preserve the image of God and of our divine Saviour, which during the Ecclesiastical Year has been shown to us so often, and in so glorious a manner, without stain in our soul, unto the day on which we must appear before Him, our purest image, our Lord and Saviour.

Although the pharisees, the most bitter enemies of Christ, had in vain used all their cunning in order to put Him to death, they were at the same time not deterred from pursuing their new plans against Him. Their hatred to our Saviour was implacable, and they were indefatigable in inventing means by which to satisfy their malice. They, therefore, consulted among themselves, according to the Gospel of to-day, how to ensnare Him in His speech, and since they themselves had no power to punish Him, they determined to deliver Him up to the temporal power, and have Him thus punished. To obtain this end, they devised a plan by which they felt sure to ensnare Him in His speech; they sent, therefore, some of their disciples to Jesus, who proposed to Him the very captious question as to whether it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?

The Jews, after their country had become a province of the Romans, had to pay certain taxes to the emperor, which they did very unwillingly, since they considered themselves a free people, owing tribute to God and to no one else; and for this reason they deemed this taxation as interfering with the right of God. The question proposed by the pharisees was, therefore, very difficult, for a definite answer would have been a cause for grave accusations. Had our Saviour said to them: Yes, it is lawful! He would have turned the people against Him, and they would no longer have looked upon Him as their Messiah and Saviour; and thus, according to the wish of the pharisees, all His respect and authority would have been lost before the people. On the contrary, if He had said: No, it is not lawful, He would naturally have appeared as an enemy of Cæsar, and the Herodians, who lived in perfect harmony with the Romans, and who were for that reason added to the embassy, would not have neglected to accuse our Saviour before the Roman governor, which, according to the desire of His enemies, would have caused him to incur a severe punishment from the temporal powers. Christ, however, by His divine wisdom confounded also this cunning design of His enemies.

After having given them clearly to understand that He knew their malice against Him, which they had concealed under the cloak of respect and veneration, He told them to show Him the coin of tribute; and after they themselves had declared that it bore the image and the inscription of Cæsar, he gave them the appropriate, simple, and to them quite unexpected answer: "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." In this answer of the Saviour was contained the following meaning:—Since, according to the coin, you are really subject to Cæsar, you have to render unto him what is due to him, and whatever is prescribed by the temporal power as lawful to pay; but in fulfilling your obligations towards your temporal masters do not forget the obligations which you owe to God, your Lord and Saviour.

By the answer which our Saviour gave to the pharisees, we also are instructed how we should combine our obedience towards the temporal authorities with the obedience due to God, our Creator and Lord, since both these obligations are in no manner opposed to the principles of Christianity, and must necessarily be united with each other. It is our duty, above all things, to obey and serve God, our Creator and Lord, our Saviour and Sanctifier; *His image* we have in our souls, since we are created according to His image and likeness; we bear also His inscription, His name, because in holy baptism we have received the honorable name of *Christian*, that is *disciple of Christ*. Whatever we possess, either bodily or spiritual advantages, either temporal or eternal goods, we have received from God; it is, therefore, natural, just, and right to apply all these goods which we receive from God to His honor, to serve Him faithfully, and to obey Him in all the circumstances of life, at all times, and in all places.

With this obedience due to God is necessarily connected the obedience towards the temporal authorities; for whoever renders to God what is God's, will —in as far as it is not against the commandments of God—obey also the civil authorities, because obedience towards the temporal authorities is commanded by the law of God. Our Saviour, therefore, who commanded the Jews in the Gospel of to-day to obey the civil authorities, that is to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, practiced this obligation Himself, since on another occasion, when He was told to pay tribute, He did not refuse, but paid it, not only for Himself, but also for Peter, and even performed a miracle in order to obtain the money necessary. (Matt. 17: 23–26.)

St. Paul gives us a very important instruction on the obedience due to the temporal authorities. He says: "Let every soul be subject to higher powers: for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good: and thou shalt have praise from the same. For he is

the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, fear: for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For therefore also you pay tribute: for they are the ministers of God, serving unto this purpose. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute, to whom tribute *is due:* custom to whom custom: fear, to whom fear: honor, to whom honor." (Rom. 13: 1–7.)

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Jerem. 29.

"THE Lord saith, I think thoughts of peace, and not of affliction. You shall call upon me, and I will hear you, and I will bring back your captivity from all places. Lord, thou hast blessed thy land, thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob." Glory be to the Father.

The holy Prophet in these words consoled the people of Israel by announcing to them the decree of God that they would soon be freed from Babylonian captivity, and would return to their native country, to Jerusalem and Judea; in the same manner does the Church desire, at the close of the Ecclesiastical Year, to call our attention to the approaching redemption through Christ of her faithful servants upon earth, and to their deliverance from all sufferings, afflictions, and adversities. and to their speedy reception into the heavenly Jerusalem.

PRAYER.

Absolve, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the sins of Thy people, that we may be delivered by Thy goodness from the bonds of sin which, by our frailty, we have committed. Through Christ, our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Phil. 3: 17–21; 4: 1–3.

"Be followers of me, brethren, and observe them who walk so as you have our model. For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping) that they are enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction: whose God is their belly: and whose glory is their shame: who mind earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of his glory, according to the operation whereby also he is able

to subdue all things unto himself. Therefore, my dearly beloved brethren, and most desired, my joy and my crown: so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. I beg of Evodia, and I beseech Syntyche to be of one mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, my sincere companion, help those women that have labored with me in the gospel with Clement and the rest of my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life."

In connection with the Introit, the Church exhorts the faithful in the above Epistle to lead pious and holy lives, and warns us against imitating the wicked and perverse conduct of the sensual man by directing our attention to the last hours of both, since a virtuous life leads to eternal happiness, and a wicked life to eternal damnation.

St. Paul, and those who walk as he did, are proposed to us in the Epistle of to-day as models of a truly Christian and virtuous life; the great Apostle who could say of himself that, free from all earthly strife, and dead or rather crucified to the world, he lived in Christ alone, very justly admonishes the Christians to follow him, as he, in another passage, exhorted them, saying: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1.) A very important lesson which is not put in practice by many Christian. It happens too often that the examples of those who, by no means, lead edifying lives, but who serve the world and its pleasures, are generally imitated; and we console ourselves by thinking that we are no worse than they, because we are naturally inclined to excuse our own sins by comparing them with those of others. For this very reason the Apostle urges us to choose those as models of our life, who as faithful servants of God and true followers of Christ give us examples worthy of imitation, and at the same time he calls our attention to the fact that sensual men, who indulge only in the wicked desires of the flesh, are the real enemies of the cross of Christ, either in the proper sense of the word, like the heretics of that time, who denied the power of justification through the death of Christ, seeking it only in the observance of the old Jewish law; or indirectly, like those who, although Christians in name, contradict the teachings of the Crucified by their wicked and unchristian life, in consequence of which they can expect nothing but eternal damnation. In reference to these words of the Apostle, St. Chrysostom says: "Nothing is more in opposition to a Christian than to seek quiet and idleness; nothing agrees less with our confession of faith, and with the service in which we are engaged, than to be the slaves of the world. Your Lord has been fastened to the cross, and you seek rest? Your Lord has been nailed to the cross, and you enjoy yourself? Does this agree with the character of a brave soldier? The Apostle, therefore, says: '*Many walk as enemies of the cross of Christ*,' because many feigned to be Christians, and lived in quiet and pleasure, which is contrary to the cross. The Christian soul is ready for the combat; it desires to die, it longs not after enjoyments; the cross is its portion.

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OF THE FOLLOWING

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There are those who call themselves Christians, but who are enemies of the cross; for if they were lovers of the cross, they would lead also a crucified life. Has your Lord not been fastened to the cross on your account? If you cannot be crucified like Him, imitate Him in another manner. Crucify yourself; if no one fastens *you* to the cross, do it yourself. I say, fasten yourself to the cross, not that you should kill yourself, God forbid! but as St. Paul says: 'The world is crucified to me, and I to the world.' (Gal. 6 : 14.) Those, however, who love their life and body, are enemies of the cross; whoever is a lover of pleasure and earthly quiet, is an enemy of the cross. Not here below do we desire to seek rest, but we wish to be glorified where we will find real life."

Our conversation therefore should be in heaven, continues the Apostle, that is, although according to the body still tied to the world, and clothed in our mortality, our spirit should raise itself above the things of this world towards heaven, where all its desires and wishes should dwell, where is our true country, where Christ our Saviour reigns, and from whence we expect Him, in order to be raised up by Him to the glory of heaven. St. Gregory, comparing St. Paul and the other Saints with an eagle soaring aloft, makes the following just remarks. He says: 'Behold, how this eagle builds his nest in the heavens, by saying: 'Our conversation is in heaven,' and again: 'God hath raised us up together (with Christ), and hath made us sit together in the heavenly places.' He has his rest in heaven, because there is his hope founded; he does not wish to lower his spirit in the depths, he desires not to abase himself by the perversity of this human life. St. Paul was probably in prison when he declared that he was in heaven together with Christ; he was, however, where he had fixed his soul, burning with desire, and not where by necessity the inert perishable body kept him. It seems," continues this great Doctor of the Church, "to be a special qualification of the elect to know how to pass through the pilgrimage of this life, and to reach by the exercise of confident hope such a height that whatever passes by they see below them, and whatever is prominent in this world, they trample under their feet out of love for the eternal goods. Our Lord said the same through the Prophet, to the soul that follows Him: 'I will lift thee up above the high places of the earth.' (Isaias 58 : 14.) For there are depths in the world, such as temporal losses, disgrace, poverty, and contempt, which even the lovers of this world, while walking on the broad road, continually endeavor to trample under their feet by avoiding them. The mountains and hills of this world are temporal gain, flattery of those who are our subjects, abundance and wealth, honor and distinction, all of which those who walk in the valley of low desires esteem as high and great things. If, however, the heart is fixed on heaven, it will soon become evident how despicable are those things which we valued so highly; for as he who ascends a mountain looks with contempt upon what he sees below him, in the same manner is he lifted up above the high places of the earth, who directs his wishes to heavenly things, because he sees

the nothingness of earthly things, and whatever he, when formerly filled with sensual desires, believed to be above him, he now discerns, while progressing in his ascent, as being far below him."

At the close of the Epistle of to-day, the Apostle advises two Christian women, who took care of the poor and the sick, and who, as it seems, had been quarreling, to forgive one another, and to live in peace together; and entreats his companion (probably the Bishop of the Christians of Philippi), together with Clement (a disciple of SS. Peter and Paul, and afterwards the third successor of St. Peter), and the rest of his fellow-laborers, to assist and help the two pious women. By the words, *whose names are in the book of life*, the Apostle does not wish to say that those faithful servants would surely obtain eternal life, so that they could not lose it (this cannot with certainty be said of any mortal), but only that by reason of their justice and piety they belonged to those who were destined to be saved if they only persevered. Our Saviour Himself says: "He that perseveres unto the end, he shall be saved," (Matt. 10 : 22; 24 : 13;) and in the same manner St. Paul says of himself: "I am not conscious by myself of anything, yet I am not hereby justified," (1 Cor. 4 : 4;) and, therefore, exhorts Christians to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2 : 12.)

GOSPEL.—Matt. 9 : 18-26.

"At that time: As Jesus was speaking to the multitudes, behold a certain ruler came up, and adored him, saying: Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus rising up, followed him, with his disciples. And behold a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a rout, he said: Give place, for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. And when the multitude was put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand. And the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country."

The Church, in connection with the Epistle of to-day, proposes to us in the above Gospel, our Saviour removing by His kind assistance all misery, affliction, sickness, and death from mankind, thus restoring all to life and health. At the same time she reminds us by the resuscitation of the daughter of Jairus, how the Lord will one day, according to His omnipotence, raise us from the corruption of death to an eternal and immortal life, in which He will, if by a Chris-

tian life we are added to the Elect, reform the body of our lowness, and make it like to the body of His glory.

In reference to the resuscitation, related to us in the Gospel of to-day, it deserves to be especially noticed that among the many dead, resuscitated by our Saviour during His earthly life, only *three* are mentioned: *the daughter of Jairus* (see Gospel of to-day), *the young man of Naim* (see Gospel on the fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost), and *Lazarus* (see Gospel on Friday after the fourth Sunday in Lent). The difference in age of these three dead persons, and of the manner in which they were again brought to life, is full of significance. The daughter of Jairus died when a child; she lay in the house of her parents, and was restored to life by Christ, who said the following simple words: "Maid, arise!" (Luke 8 : 54.) The young man of Naim had attained the age of manhood; he had been dead for some time; his body had been taken out of the house, and was outside of the gate of the city on the way to the grave, when our Saviour restored him to life by saying the following emphatic words: "Young man, I say to thee, arise!" and finally Lazarus, who died when a man; he was already in the grave, and his body had commenced to decay, and the Lord resuscitated him, crying with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come forth!"

The holy Fathers apply the deaths of these three persons, and the manner of their resuscitation, to the different degrees of *sinners* who, on account of their sins, are justly called *spiritually dead*, but by the performance of penance are considered as being *spiritually risen*. The daughter of Jairus signifies the first degree of sin, committed out of human frailty or else secretly, a sin which by a slight admonition of divine grace can be easily known, repented, and amended. The young man of Naim indicates the state of actual sin, and relapse into the same, by which penance is made more difficult, and for the amendment of which greater help from God is necessary. Lazarus denotes the entire depravity of sin, by which the sinner, like Lazarus in the winding-cloths, is bound with evil habits, and is putrified in a spiritual manner by the wickedness of sin; for such a sinner the strongest assistance of divine grace is necessary, and only the loud voice of God can awaken the sinner from his sleep of death to a spiritual resurrection, to penance and amendment. St. Augustine says: "If the Lord, according to His great mercy and grace, resuscitates even the soul (from the death of sin), so that it shall not die forever, we can easily perceive that the three dead persons whom He restored to life according to the body, signify something else; that they represent the resurrection of the soul through faith. He resuscitated the daughter of a ruler of the synagogue, lying dead in the house; He restored to life the young man, the son of a widow, whose body had been already carried outside of the gate of the city; He revived Lazarus, who had laid four days in the grave. Every one now may look upon his own soul; if it sins, it will die, for sin is the death of the soul. Sometimes sins of thought are committed by consenting with pleasure to bad thoughts; this consent kills you in a

spiritual manner; death, however, is still in the house, because the evil thought has not yet become an act. The spiritual resurrection of such a soul by the Lord is signified by the resuscitation of the young girl, who was not as yet carried out of the house, but whose body was still lying there. If, however, you have not only consented to wicked thoughts, but have committed the act also, you have carried your soul, dead in sin, out of the house—it is outside of the gate; if, however, you do penance, the Lord will restore you to life, and as He gave the young man back to his mother, so will He give you back to the Church, your mother. The third instance, Lazarus, denotes an advanced state of spiritual death—evil habits; for there is a great difference between falling into sin, and being in the habit of committing sin. Whoever reforms after having sinned, revives soon again, because he is not confirmed in the habit, and is not yet laid in the grave of sin; but he who lives in the indulgence of a sinful habit is, as it were, buried, and justly is it said of him: 'He stinketh!' for he will have a bad name which is to be compared with an offensive odor. To this class belong all who are sunk in vice and immorality. But these also can be resuscitated by the divine power of Christ; for we daily see men laying aside their evil habits, and putting on the garment of a better life, and they are often better than those by whom they were formerly condemned. In the same manner was the sister of Lazarus restored to a better life; she, who was a wicked sinner, was freed from the burden of evil habits, and to her was it said: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." (Luke 7 : 47.)

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

[N. B.—If there should be more than twenty-four Sundays after Pentecost, the Masses after the twenty-third will be of those Sundays after Epiphany, which were passed over, and the following is the order to be observed:

If there be twenty-five Sundays, on the twenty-fourth is said the Mass and Gospel of the sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

If there be twenty-six Sundays, on the twenty-fourth is said the Mass and Gospel of the Fifth, and on the twenty-fifth, that of the Sixth after Epiphany.

If there be twenty-seven Sundays, on the twenty-fourth is said the Mass of the Fourth; on the twenty-fifth that of the Fifth; on the twenty-sixth, that of the Sixth after Epiphany.

If there be twenty-eight Sundays, on the twenty-fourth is said the Mass of the Third; on the twenty-fifth, that of the Fourth; on the twenty-sixth, that of the Fifth; on the twenty-seventh, that of the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

The Mass and Gospel of the Twenty-fourth, are always to be said *on the last* Sunday after Pentecost.]

The Introit of the Mass is the same as on the Twenty-Third Sunday.

PRAYER.

Stir up the wills of Thy faithful, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that more earnestly seeking after the fruit of good works, they may receive more abundant helps from Thy mercy. Through Christ, our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Col. 1 : 9-14.

"Brethren: We cease not to pray for you, and to beg that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding: that you may walk worthy of God, in all things pleasing: being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God: strengthened with all might, according to the power of his glory, in all patience and long-suffering with joy, giving thanks to God the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins."

On this Sunday, the last of the Ecclesiastical Year, the Church directs our attention to the final and highest end which the faithful, after striving and persevering in the kingdom of God upon earth, shall one day obtain as the fruit of redemption and sanctification, that is *a happy perfection in the kingdom of heaven.* According to the above Epistle this happy perfection will be accomplished by the grace of God in the kingdom of Christ, the Church, into which we are called, where the heavenly Father enables us with His grace to obtain our eternal and imperishable portion of the heavenly light (eternal happiness). The Apostle in this passage declares that there are two things necessary for salvation: the perfect knowledge of the divine will, and the strength to fulfill the known will of God, that is, a living faith in Christ, the Son of God; a faith which is shown by an active love, and by the performance of works pleasing to God. "For," says the Apostle, "Christians must walk *worthy of God,* that is according to His will and commandments, and must be fruitful in every *good work,* and strengthened through the grace of God, and patiently and cheerfully persevere in all their afflictions and adversities, in all their labors and toils, and in self-denial, according to the commands of the Gospel, considering the glorious reward and sublime end which they will one day obtain in heaven. St. Chrysostom, in commenting on the above consoling words of the Apostle, makes the following appropriate remarks: "Man, what do you say! You are called to the kingdom, to the kingdom of the Son of God, and yet you are overcome with sleep, and, after teh manner of the idle, are sunk in apathy! If you were ex-

posed daily to a thousand deaths, would you not suffer all cheerfully so as to obtain *a temporal kingdom*; should you not then in order to gain *a heavenly kingdom* encounter a thousand swords, and even throw yourself into the fire? But you are sad, because you must leave this world; and would rather, so occupied are you with the care of your body, remain with these perishable goods. Death is to you a terror! The reason of this is your effeminate mode of life. He who leads an austere life wishes rather to die, and to be freed from this life. It is with us as with the idle young birds who wish always to remain in the nest. The longer they remain therein, the weaker they will become; for this world is like a nest made out of brushwood and clay. If you show me grand houses or even royal palaces, shining with gold and precious stones, I would look upon them just as I would upon the nests of the swallows; for on the approach of winter (old age or the end of the world) they fall to pieces of themselves."

GOSPEL.—Matt. 24 : 15–35.

"At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: When you shall see "the abomination of desolation," which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place: he that readeth, let him understand. Then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains. And he that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take any thing out of his house: and he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat. And woe to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days. But pray that your flight be not in the winter, or on the sabbath. For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved: but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say to you: Lo here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, in so much as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold I have told it to you beforehand. If therefore they shall say to you: Behold he is in the desert; go ye not out: behold he is in the closets; believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together. And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be moved. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn: and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And he shall send his angels with a trumpet, and a great voice: and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them.

And from the fig-tree learn a parable: when the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors. Amen, I say to you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

The Church on this Sunday very appropriately closes her Sanctified Year by proposing for the consideration of her faithful children the final events with which the Ecclesiastical Year terminates, *the end of the world and the last judgment*, as described in the most impressive manner by the Eternal Truth Himself.

Our Saviour in this day's Gospel, besides foretelling the last judgment, prophecies another terrible event which would take place long before the end of the world, the destruction of Jerusalem, and in connection with it He speaks of the future fate of the Jewish nation.

Different signs, forerunners of great tribulation, should, according to the prediction of the Saviour, precede the first of the two great events—the destruction of Jerusalem—without doubt the most awful event that has taken place since the beginning of the world, and which was intended to serve as a warning to the disciples and others of the faithful who lived at that time in Jerusalem, to leave the doomed city at once, in order to escape the fate of the unbelieving Jews. In the first part of the discourse, contained in the Gospel of to-day, our Saviour makes special mention of wars and rumors of wars, of the persecution of the disciples of Christ, the appearance of false prophets, and even signs in the heavens, as the precursors of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem. In the Gospel of to-day He even fixed the time when the destruction of the city would take place: "When you shall see the 'abomination of desolation,' which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place," that is in the temple. According to the writings of the holy Fathers, this passage can be differently interpreted, that is in the ending of the sacrifices, the desecration of the temple by idolatry being introduced, and the desolation caused by the Jews themselves in the temple during the siege of their city by the Romans.

History tells us how accurately this prophecy of the Saviour was fulfilled concerning the city of Jerusalem, which should serve as a warning to all future generations, and as a proof of the divine punishment which the wicked Jews well deserved for putting to death the Son of God, thereby filling the measure of their iniquities, and one which they had called down upon themselves in sinful blindness, by crying out, when our Saviour was condemned to die: "His blood be upon us, and upon our children!" (Matt. 27 : 25.)

The most terrible signs, however, shall precede the end of the world, the greatest of all events. There shall arise false prophets, as before the destruction of Jerusalem, who, by working apparent miracles and by other devices, will,

if possible, deceive even the elect; the Church shall be persecuted by Antichrist and his adherents, of whom mention is often made in the Scriptures. Concerning this enemy of God and the Church, who is to appear before the end of the world, St. Paul says: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for unless there come a revolt first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. Who opposeth, and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God. And when that wicked one shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall kill with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: him, whose coming is according to the working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and in all seduction of iniquity to them that perish: because they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved." (2 Thessal. 2: 3, 4; 8–10.)

Strange occurrences shall announce the approaching end of the world; the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven; in short, the beautiful order of creation, which has existed for centuries through the all-wise and omnipotent Providence of the Creator, shall be destroyed; the world shall perish through the omnipotent power of Him who has created it, and then the Lord, the all-just Judge, shall come to judge the living and the dead.

According to the prediction of the Lord, the time is uncertain when the end will come, and the last judgment take place; but as surely as the prophecy of Christ has been fulfilled in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem, so surely shall be fulfilled all that He has predicted concerning the end of the world and the last judgment—for at the close of the Gospel He says: "Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass!"

If the Church, in the beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year, reminds us of the prophecy of Christ in regard to the last judgment, so as to encourage us at the holy time preceding the birth of our Lord, to prepare ourselves in such a manner for His gracious advent that we shall not be confounded at *His terrible coming* in judgment; how much more should we not be encouraged at the close of the Ecclesiastical Year to meditate with the utmost attention upon the terror of all terrors, presented to us in the Gospel of to-day—the end of the world and the last judgment, and from this consideration draw wholesome fruits for our moral amendment, for the hating of sin and vice, for sincere penance and conversion, for the constant practice of all Christian virtues, and, therefore, for our true perfection and sanctification, and our eternal happiness in the kingdom of God.

In conclusion we will quote a passage from the homilies of St. Chrysostom, in which this great Doctor of the Church thus speaks in reference to the last judgment: "In order to prepare your souls for the worthy habitation of God, be mindful of that terrible and fearful day when we all, standing before the throne of the

Almighty, must give an account of all we have done upon earth. Then all our sins shall be revealed before the eyes of all men, and every action known; the most secret thought of our heart shall then be discovered, the most secret deeds, whether committed in the darkness of the night or in the open day, shall be made manifest, and whatever we have done out of ignorance, neglect, or in any other manner with each one of our members or senses, shall also come to light. Remember that already we are on our way to be arraigned before a judge who cannot be deceived, before one who will judge strictly and severely not only our actions, but also our words and thoughts, and even those faults which in our eyes appeared as trifling. Represent to yourselves the Saviour, surrounded by myriads of Angels, coming to judge the living and the dead; how the trumpet of the universal judgment shall sound, and the terrible voice be heard with which the Judge shall pronounce His sentence, how some will be cast into exterior darkness, and others excluded from entering heaven, although they have tried hard during their whole life-time to preserve their innocence; how many are like weeds thrown into the fire, and others are abandoned to the ever gnawing worm of conscience! One shall be judged, because he has nourished envy and malice in his heart, another on account of the injuries inflicted upon his neighbor, or because he has given scandal; one is punished on account of rash judgment, and the other is excluded from heaven, because he lived in enmity and strife; another is damned forever, because he entertained hatred and revenge in his heart. All of those are deprived of seeing God, and shall hear the words: 'Amen, amen, I say to you, I know you not,' (Matt. 25 : 12) because they acted against the will of Christ.

"Let us ponder well upon this truth, and bring it to our clear knowledge before the shadows of death encompass us, and before the day of the Lord comes, of whom the Prophet says: 'Behold, he cometh, and who shall be able to think of the day of his coming?' (Malach. 3 : 12.)

"If you, however, desire to know how it is possible to evade this terrible judgment, I will answer you, endeavor to keep pure your body, and repay the evil which has been done to you with kindness, and if you are offended, and have been unjustly accused, do not allow yourself to be carried away by wicked passions, but be patient and meek; if you have performed works of penance, do not glory in them, and let your fasting consist not only in abstaining from food, but also in abstaining from every sin. You read in the holy Scriptures of the new law, that when we are ushered into eternity, no man can either retain us or change our fate; brother cannot save brother from ruin and never ending torments, nor the friend his friend, nor the child his parents, nor the parent his child. When the king commanded his servants to bind him who had come to the marriage-feast without having on his wedding-garment, and to cast him into exterior darkness, no one dared to intercede for him. (Matt. 25 : 12, 13.) Neither did any one intercede for the servant who had hidden the talent given

to him in the earth. (Matt. 25 : 24.) The five wise virgins were not allowed to assist their foolish companions who had forgotten to take oil with them, and could not obtain for them an entrance to the marriage-feast. (Matt. 25 : 1–12.) On the day of judgment the Son of man will separate the good from the bad, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; the sheep He will place on His right hand, and the goats on His left. Then shall He say to those on His right hand: 'Come ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Those, however, who are on His left hand He shall cast into everlasting fire, from which no one can save them. (Matt. 25 : 34–42.) When the rich man, who, while living upon earth, showed no mercy to poor Lazarus, asked in the place of torments, for only one drop of water, in order to cool the fire of his tongue for one moment, it was not given him, because between the good and bad there is placed a great chaos; Abraham himself could not soothe the torments of the damned. (Luke 16.)

"If, therefore, when the night of death shall come upon us, we cannot rely on the assistance of others, let us help ourselves while on earth by faithfully serving God, thus avoiding a terrible evil, and preparing for ourselves eternal happiness in the next world. It is indeed better to suffer want and privation for a short time upon earth than to feast sumptuously, and in eternity, like the rich man, long in vain for a drop of water to quench our burning thirst. Let us, therefore, by suffering trifling distresses, patiently avoid eternal torments! How can earthly misery appear to us as a real torment, when we compare it with the pains which await those who are rejected by Almighty God? And when the sentence of death, pronounced by a worldly judge against a man who is thereby deprived of a few years of his life, fills us with fear and trembling, how terrified should we not be at a sentence which deprives us of eternal life? With what horror are we not filled when we see punishment executed upon a criminal! But such punishments are but faint shadows when compared with the sufferings of the sinner in hell! Earthly pains end with life, but in eternity pain never ceases for one moment; they begin always anew; the gnawing worm of the tortured conscience never dies, and the fire is never extinguished! What shall the damned say or do when they see themselves thus punished, and forever excluded from heaven? How will they lament and weep, but in vain! Then, although too late, they will know their folly and wickedness, and will be finally convinced as to what they should have either done or left undone while upon earth. They will then know how unhappy it was for them not to have followed the admonition of amending their lives. But as the helmsman is useless when the ship is sinking, and as the physician cannot render any assistance when his patient has been taken away by death, so it is without avail to the damned when they see their sins, and are convinced that they should have lived differently. Those who have despised Christ, will know Him then as the Sa-

viour who came in the name of the Lord; but they know Him too late, for the time is passed in which they should have known Him!

"O unhappy we! What defence can we offer on that day, when heaven and earth, sun and moon, day and night, and all the creatures of the world will accuse us, will bear testimony against us, and call down upon us the retribution of God? When our own conscience shall raise its voice in accusation against us, then may all other witnesses be silent!"

LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

FEAST OF ALL-SAINTS.

(November 1.)

FROM BAYERLE.

"Holiness."

OUR holy Catholic Church, who, guided by the divine Spirit, cares unceasingly for the honor of God and the welfare of her faithful, and omits nothing that may promote these two great ends, does not content herself with the daily veneration of *one* or *several* of the blessed inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, by celebrating their feasts, and admonishing all believers in Christ to venerate and imitate them; but she celebrates also a special feast in commemoration of *all Saints*, of all members of the Church triumphant, in order that God, who is great in His Saints, and to whom the veneration of the Saints refers, may thereby be so much the more glorified, and those whose trust is Christ, by the contemplation of so many virtuous examples, be so much the more powerfully encouraged and animated to follow in their footsteps in the way leading to salvation. And as the number of the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem is infinite, and very many of them are unknown to us, their names not being contained in the calendar of the Saints acknowledged by the Church—for the Church proceeds with the greatest caution in the canonization of one of her members—for that reason to-day's feast is appointed for the veneration of those whose names are unknown to us, as also of all the elect who participate in glory everlasting.

The Church, however, for several centuries did not celebrate a feast in honor of all Saints; she observed only the feasts of the holy Apostles and martyrs, which was celebrated during the season of Easter, in commemoration of

those holy servants of God. In the first centuries only the *martyrs*, that is such as had really laid down their life for the true faith, were venerated as Saints. The first of the so-called *believers*, venerated as a Saint, is said to have been St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, who lived at the beginning of the fifth century. The present Feast of All-Saints is of later origin, and was instituted, says the venerable Bede, the great teacher of the Church, for the following reason: "We read in the history of the Church that St. Boniface IV., who occupied the Holy See after St. Gregory (from the year 608 until 615), was presented at his own request by the Emperor Phocas with a temple in the city of Rome, formerly called the Pantheon, because it had been devoted to the veneration of all the heathen gods. After he had cleansed it from all impurities of the heathen rites of worship, he changed it into a church, and consecrated it to the holy Mother of God and all the Christian martyrs, in order that, after the many idols had been removed, many Saints should be venerated there by the followers of Christ. All the Christians of Rome, on the first day of November, assembled in the new church consecrated in honor of all the Saints, and after the solemn celebration of Mass by the Head of the Church, and a most edifying service, according to custom, they all returned joyfully to their homes. In consequence of this consecration feast it was afterwards decreed, when the Christian religion had spread over all the world, that the veneration and commemoration feast of All-Saints should be celebrated in all the Christian churches throughout the world on the day mentioned above (the first of November), in order that what human weakness, either out of ignorance or negligence, would not observe on the feasts of the different Saints, should be accomplished during the celebration of this feast, and in order that, assisted by the intercession of the Saints, we may obtain everlasting blessings.

The Feast of All-Saints is undoubtedly one of the most glorious solemnities of our holy Catholic Church, and one of the most instructive to her children; for it shows what glorious blossoms and fruit may be brought forth by that ever green tree of life (the Church); and it is one of the most striking proofs of the holiness of that Church from which they proceeded, animating, encouraging, and urging us to follow in the footsteps of those who walked in the road of virtue and holiness. Concerning this, the venerable Bede most beautifully expresses himself in his sermon of this day: "To-day, my beloved, we celebrate with a common joy the Feast of All-Saints, in whose company the heavens exult, in whose protection the earth rejoices, with whose triumph the holy Church is crowned, and whose confession, the firmer it was in suffering, is now the more gloriously honored; for as great as was the struggle, so great is also the glory of those who underwent it, and the greatness of martyrdom is glorified through the diversity and variety of their sufferings. Our mother, the Catholic Church, spreading over all the world, has learned in her Head, Jesus Christ, not to fear disgrace, torture, and death, and always increasing in strength, not by resist-

ance, but by suffering. She has also endowed all those, who, as a glorious multitude, languished in the fetters of persecution, with a similar heroism of enduring the glorious struggle. O truly happy mother (Church), enlightened by the majesty of divine glory, adorned with the glorious blood of victorious martyrs, ornamented with the shining purity of untarnished confession, whose garlands are neither without roses nor lilies! O that all the faithful, my beloved, might vie in obtaining such honor and distinguished glory, in striving for heavenly crowns, either for the white of purity or the purple-red of martyrdom! In the camp of heaven, peace as well as combat have their own crowns to crown therewith the champions of Christ. The goodness of God, unspeakable and infinite, has ordained that the duration of hardships and struggles should not be long or last forever, but short, and lasting, as it were, but for a moment; that struggles and afflictions should in this life be short and perishable, and crowns and rewards of merit in the future eternal; that the troubles should be short, and the rewards everlasting; that the Saints, after the darkness of this world, should behold the brightest light, and obtain a happiness surpassing all the bitterness of their sufferings, according to the testimony of the Apostle, who says: 'That the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.'" (Rom. 8 : 18.)

The Feast of All-Saints belongs in its high significance to the highest feasts of the Church, and is, therefore celebrated with an Octave.

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 129.

"Let us all rejoice in the Lord, celebrating a festival-day in honor of all the Saints, at whose solemnity the angels rejoice, and give praise to the Son of God. Rejoice in the Lord, ye just; praise becometh the upright." Glory be to the Father.

In these words, our holy Church expresses her joy at the glorification of so many of her children, and also animates us to participate in this joy of our common Mother, and to venerate with her the Saints of God, and in them God the most holy.

PRAYER.

"O Almighty God, who has granted us to venerate in one solemnity the merits of all Thy saints, we beseech Thee that, as our intercessors are multiplied, Thou wouldst bestow upon us the desired abundance of mercy." Through Christ. Amen.

EPISTLE.—Apoc. 7 : 2–12.

"In those days: Behold I John saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the sign of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to

the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying: Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we sign the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them that were signed, an hundred forty-four thousand were signed, of every tribe of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda, were twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Ruben, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Gad, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Aser, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Nephthali, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Manasses, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Issachar, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Zabulon, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand signed. Of the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand signed. After this, I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues: standing before the throne and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: and they cried with a loud voice, saying: Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and the ancients, and the four living creatures; and they fell down before the throne upon their faces, and adored God, saying: Amen. Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor, and power, and strength to our God forever and ever. Amen."

The Church to-day most significantly brings before us the passage of St. John, in which the holy Prophet describes, in the mysterious language which he uses, how the Lord God sends an angel to avert for a while, the great miseries that were to come over the world, first at the destruction of Jerusalem, and then at the approach of the last judgment, until he had marked, as it were, with the seal of Divine protection, the faithful servants of God, the elect, to guard them thereby against those terrors. He also enumerates the number of the elect among the Jewish tribes (which, however, may be regarded as an indefinitely great number), omitting, however, the tribe of Dan, because, according to the opinion of nearly all commentators, that tribe first committed the sin of idolatry—a warning to all, that faithlessness will lead to eternal ruin. The holy Prophet then points to the chosen who have come forth from the Gentiles, saying: *After this I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne, and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.* We see, therefore, that the number of the chosen of the Gentile nations is much larger than that of the Jewish tribes,—a truth that affords great consolation to us Christians, the descendants of Gentiles, but which must also animate and inspire us to join that great multitude of faithful servants of God, by means of a virtuous and holy life.

GOSPEL.—Matt. 5: 1–12.

"At that time: Jesus seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain, and when he was sat down, his disciples came unto him. And opening his mouth, he taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."

The Church in to-day's, as also in yesterday's Gospel, brings before us the first part of the celebrated Sermon upon the Mount, of our Divine Saviour, in which he proclaimed the most important doctrines, the essence of Christianity, in a very simple but most sublime manner, before the multitude. It begins, most significantly, with the so-called *eight Beatitudes*, or rather with the blessedness of the most excellent virtues, which, in their true and full meaning, comprehend the whole moral life and aim of the Christian. Jesus says, first: "Blessed are the *the poor in spirit*"—meaning thereby, first of all, the really poor, who bear their poverty with patience, and resignation to the will of God; then such as possess earthly goods, but do not love them too much, such, as the Apostle says: "Who rejoice as they who are not rejoicing: and they who buy, as if they were not possessing anything: and they who use this world, as if they used it not," (1 Corinth. 7: 30, 31;)—and who, therefore, only use their earthly goods to accomplish good purposes; and finally, the *humble*, who, despite all that they possess and are, ascribe nothing to themselves, but all to God. On this account, the latter, meaning the *poor in spirit*, are first mentioned, because humility is the basis and necessary condition of all other virtues; for without humility there is neither meekness nor peace, neither a sincere contrition for sin, nor a striving for uprightness; neither true charity and patience, nor purity of heart. In this regard, St. Chrysostom says: "The Saviour observed in the succession of the eight Beatitudes a most beautiful order, joining to each virtue that one which would necessarily follow, and thus uniting them, as it were, in a golden chain. For he who is humble, will also certainly regret his sins; and he who is sorry for his sins, will also be meek, just, and charitable; and he who possesses these virtues, will also be pure in heart. And he who is armed with all these perfections, will also be ready to brave every danger, and will not shrink from disgrace and persecution." We are most beautifully and urgently exhorted to imitate the example of the saints by St. Chrysostom,

who says: "Let him, who with a pious and loving heart, admires the merits of the Saints, and always praises the glory of the just, also imitate their holy virtues and righteousness; and let him who rejoices in a life pleasing to God, also feel himself called upon to manifest the same joyful obedience to the will of God. Therefore, he must either imitate what he praises, or he must not praise what he refuses to imitate; in order, that in praising others, he may show himself worthy of praise, and in admiring the merits of the Saints, may distinguish himself by a holiness of life worthy of admiration. For, if we love the just and faithful, because we acknowledge in them justice and unwavering faith, then we may also be what they are, if we do what they do. And it must not appear so difficult for us to imitate that which we see accomplished by them, knowing that there lived before them many who accomplished glorious deeds, without having had before them such encouraging examples. Thus we see already at the beginning of the world, that the innocent Abel was murdered, and Henoch removed from the earth as pleasing to God; that Noah was found just, and Abraham faithful; that Moses was recognized as meek, Josua as chaste, David as mild, Elias as agreeable to God, Daniel as holy, and that the three young men were victorious. The Apostles, the disciples of Christ, are given to us as teachers and models; imitating their example, the Christian fights with heroic courage; the Martyr obtains glorious triumphs, and the champions of Christ always conquer the infernal enemy with the weapons of God. In this army of the Saints, we everywhere find similar virtues, and glorious victories, though their struggles were of the most different kinds. Therefore, O Christian, thou art no real warrior, if thou believest that thou canst conquer without a struggle, and gain a victory and triumph without a battle. Exercise thy strength, fight valiantly, and struggle indefatigably in this holy contest. Consider thy covenant of baptism, be mindful of thy rank, and regard thy calling as a champion of Christ! To this covenant thou didst bind thyself, this rank thou hast chosen, for this didst thou receive thy name: *Christian*, warrior, anointed champion of light against darkness."

COMMEMORATION OF ALL SOULS DEPARTED.

(November 2.)

From Bayerle.

"Purgatory."

St. Paul the Apostle most beautifully compares the Church of Christ to a body, of which Christians are the members, and Christ the head, to express the close and inseparable union with which all the members of the Catholic Church are united to each other and to their head, Jesus Christ. For as in a living body every member works not only for itself, but also for all others, for the preservation of the whole body, and as the healthy condition of the entire body promotes the well-being of each member: so in the Church of Christ each Christian must labor, not for himself alone, but for the welfare of all his fellow members, just as the Universal Church is concerned at the good or bad conduct of each one of the faithful. This truth St. Paul expresses by saying: "If one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it: or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Corinth. 12: 26.) This intimate and inseparable union of all the members of our holy Church with each other, and their (invisible) head, Jesus Christ, is called, in the language of the Church, the Communion of Saints; and this communion, or spiritual body of the Catholic Church, consists of three divisions: 1. The Church militant, comprising the faithful on earth; 2. The Church triumphant, comprising the Saints in heaven; and 3d, the Church suffering, comprising the souls in purgatory.

The interest which the Church militant on earth takes in those who already enjoy the bliss of heaven, is proved by the festivals she celebrates in their honor, during the Ecclesiastical year, and especially by the feast of All-Saints, devoted to the memory and veneration of *all the Saints*, and of *all the members* of the Church triumphant. But the Church, in her maternal love, takes the same sincere interest in the fate of those who, although they departed this life in union with her, in the true faith and grace of God, yet, because the soul was not entirely without stain, have not yet entered the abode of everlasting peace, but must still for some time suffer in purgatory, until they are perfectly pure, and thus worthy of entering the Church triumphant, the communion of the blessed inhabitants of heaven. *The commemoration of all departed Christian souls*, therefore, most significantly follows immediately after the *Feast of All-Saints;* so that we, the members of the Church militant here on earth, having yesterday, with joyful hearts, lifted up our eyes to the glory of the elect in heaven, may to-day, with painful compassion, remember the poor souls in purgatory, showing our sincere and active sympathy in their behalf, by praying that they may be speedily freed from their sufferings and received into the

abodes of heaven. The commemoration made this day, therefore, springing from the very nature of Christianity and our holy Church, existed in its essential meaning in the earliest times; for it was customary in the earliest centuries to pray for the dead. Yet, in its present form, as connected with the Feast of all Saints, it dates from the tenth century, when it was established by Odilo, Abbot of Cluny.

The commemoration of all departed Christian souls, is based upon the well-known doctrine of the Church that there is a place in which the souls of those who have departed this life in the grace of God, but are not yet entirely free from all stain of sin, have to suffer for a time until they are perfectly purified, which place on that account is called in the language of the Church the *place of cleansing* (purgatorium). This doctrine of a purgatory is not only consonant with reason, but it is also more or less clearly expressed in many passages of the sacred writings. The holiness and justice of God demands such a purgatory, for if it is only natural and also perfectly certain, according to divine revelation, that those who die impenitent, burdened with heavy sins, and without the grace of God, are rejected and forever damned, it is just as natural and consonant to divine revelation that only those who are *entirely pure* can enter the kingdom of heaven, into which, according to the teachings of the Bible, nothing defiled shall enter, (Apoc. 21 : 27;) that consequently only such as are perfectly free from all stains of sin at their death can obtain a perfect union with God. How very few of those even who strive to live and die well, and they are the few, will at the hour of death possess this spotless purity and exemption from sin! And does not the Bible teach us that *even a just man shall fall seven times* (Proverbs 24 : 16), that is, be often guilty of small offences; and that if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1 : 8.) Therefore St. Bernard says most truthfully: "Who is so perfect and holy that having departed this life, he owes nothing to that fire? Who purifies himself so perfectly from the least stain of sin that he can boast of a pure heart, and say: 'My heart is spotless, and I am without sin?' Few are chosen, and among the few chosen, as I believe, there are few so perfect as to have succeeded in this purification, of which the wise man says: 'And for thy negligences purify thyself with a few.' (Ecclus. 7 : 34.) And how frequently does it happen that a person having only committed venial sins, is carried off suddenly by death without having had time to prepare? And how often also those die immediately after their conversion, who during their whole life followed the path of vice, without being able to atone here below for their sins! And as all such, although they died in the grace of God, have still to atone for smaller sins, and for that reason cannot immediately obtain the bliss which is the inheritance of the perfectly pure, it follows quite naturally that it must be possible to atone for sins or to suffer punishments after death; and that, therefore, there must be a place or condition where the souls, not yet entirely puri

fied remain till they have completed what was left undone in their earthly life, and become entirely purified of all that still separates them from God."

This is confirmed in several passages of the sacred writings so explicitly and clearly that it appears almost incomprehensible how some Christian sects reject the doctrine of the Church in regard to a purgatory. The Jews, in the old dispensation, believed in a purgatory, and in the efficacy of prayer for the souls condemned to suffer there for sin. A striking confirmation of this is found in the second book of the Machabees. In a battle in which the valiant leader of the Israelites, Judas Machabeus, conquered the enemies of the people, several of the Jews had been slain, and we read: "And the day following, Judas came with his company to take away the bodies of them that were slain, and to bury them with their kinsmen in the sepulchres of their fathers. And they found under the coats of the slain some of the donaries of the idols of Jamnia (a city which they had taken), which the law forbiddeth to the Jews, so that all plainly saw that for this cause they were slain. Then they all blessed the just judgment of the Lord who had discovered the things that were hidden. And so betaking themselves to prayers, they besought him that the sin which had been committed might be forgotten. But the most valiant Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, for as much as they saw before their eyes what had happened, because of the sins of those that were slain. And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. (For if he had not hoped that they who were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.) And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. *It is, therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sin.*" (2 Mach. 12 : 39–46.)

This doctrine, explicitly declared in the old dispensation, is confirmed in several declarations of the new. Thus Christ Himself says regarding the atonement of certain sins in purgatory: "Make an agreement with thy adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him (that is, here on earth): lest, perhaps, the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen, I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou pay the last farthing." (Matt. 5 : 25, 26.) The Saviour still more explicitly declares the doctrine that sins may also be forgiven in the world to come, in another passage, where He says: "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it (on account of the hardness of heart connected with such sin) shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come." (Matt. 12 : 32.) St. Paul the Apostle also expresses himself regarding purgatory, where punishments for sin may be expiated, saying: "If any man build upon this foundation (upon Christ) gold, silver, precious stones,

wood, hay, stubble (that is, works of greater or less value): every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire: and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide, which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. 3 : 12–15.) In harmony with these words of the Apostle, purgatory is commonly also called a *cleansing fire*, that is, a *purifying fire*, because the fire causes pain, and is, therefore, a punishment; but it also purifies, and thus purgatory serves to punish as well as to purify from sin.

Regarding the nature of purgatory, and the condition of the souls therein, we must remark that the name *cleansing fire* does not at all entitle us to assume a real material fire of an earthly nature; its possibility, in fact, exists, but the term *fire* may also be taken figuratively, as a spiritual punishment, analogous to the spiritual condition of the departed. We may, however, be assured that the punishment in purgatory, though varying according to the different degrees of individual sin, must be very great and painful, as shown by its comparison with fire, which causes the most painful bodily torments. The fact of being separated from God, though not forever, must be in the highest degree tormenting to those souls who, freed from all earthly fetters, and endowed with a knowledge of God, most ardently desire to be united with Him, their greatest treasure; and is so much the more painful, because they know that it is through their own fault that they are not yet worthy of being elevated to that union with God. Therefore the most distinguished teachers of the Church are of the opinion that the pains of purgatory surpass all imaginable pains on earth, and that, in their kind and manner, they even do not differ from the torments of hell. Thus St. Augustine says: "This fire, though it lasts but for a time, is still very painful, for it surpasses every pain that man has suffered or can suffer during his earthly life;" and, agreeing with him, St. Thomas Aquinas writes: "The same fire torments the damned in hell, and the just in purgatory; the least pain of purgatory surpasses the greatest pain that may be undergone here below." It is true that the souls in purgatory, whilst they suffer, are consoled by the thought that they are in the grace of God; that their sufferings will end, and that, once freed, they will be elevated to heavenly bliss. Contrasting their state with the despair of the damned, who are without the hope of a coming salvation, they bear their sufferings with entire submission to the will of God. Yet their condition is notwithstanding in the highest degree sad, and so much the more so, because they can no longer help themselves; for their time of grace has passed, and they are no longer able to obtain by their own works a mitigation or shortening of their punishments. For that reason such suffering souls are called also *poor souls;* for, being in want of all real graces, they can do nothing except suffer.

But what the suffering souls in purgatory can no longer do themselves, may

be accomplished for them, and be to their benefit by us, the members of the Church militant here on earth, who still live in the time of grace, and especially by means of prayers offered by us in their behalf. By fasting and other works of penance we can also benefit the suffering souls, as we see was done already in the old dispensation by the inhabitants of Jabes, and by David for King Saul and his son Jonathan, as also for others of the house of Israel who had fallen by the sword. (1 Kings 31 : 13; 2 Kings 1 : 12.) In a like manner we may help the souls in purgatory by giving alms and other works of charity, as we are exhorted by the son of Sirach, saying: "A gift hath grace in the sight of all the living; and restrain not grace from the dead." (Ecclus. 7 : 37.)

The Catholic Church at all times made it obligatory upon the faithful to assist the departed by prayer and religious exercises of all kinds, but especially by the holy sacrifice of the Mass, as the most sublime and most effective, and by other good works, and she herself is our best model; for she daily remembers the departed in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and in all other devotional exercises, especially in the canonical hours. This custom of praying for the departed, and offering Mass for them, existed in the first centuries, and is as old as the Church herself. St. Cyril says: "We remember (at the holy sacrifice of the Mass) the departed; first the Patriarchs, Apostles, and Martyrs, that God may accept our prayers and intercessions through theirs. Then we pray for our fathers and the Bishops, and in general for all who have departed this life, hoping with confidence that they will be greatly relieved by the prayers offered for them in the holy and most sublime sacrifice." St. Augustine writes: "We cannot deny that the souls of the departed are relieved by the piety of their relatives still alive, if the sacrifice of the Mediator is offered for them or alms spent in the community in their behalf. But such only will be relieved who deserved it by their earthly life." And St. Chrysostom: "Let us pray ourselves, and also request others to pray for the departed. Let us continually give rich alms in their behalf, for it will give comfort to the departed." And St. Gregory of Nyssa: "The custom of praying for the dead has been handed down to us by the first disciples of Jesus."

INTROIT OF THE MASS.—Ps. 64 : 2, 3.

"Eternal rest give to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. A hymn, O God, becometh thee in Sion, and a vow shall be performed unto thee in Jerusalem. O Lord, hear my prayer; all flesh shall come to thee." Eternal rest, &c.

With these words, pointing to the future resurrection of the dead, predicted by the royal Prophet, and recommending also the souls of the departed to the divine grace and mercy, the Church most appropriately commences the holy

sacrifice of the Mass this day, devoted to the memory of all departed Christian souls, and every Mass for the dead commences with this Introit.

PRAYER.

O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, grant to the souls of Thy servants departed, the remission of all their sins, that by our pious supplications they may obtain the pardon which they have always desired. Who livest and reignest.

EPISTLE.—1 Cor. 15 : 51–57.

"Brethren: Behold I tell you a mystery. We shall all indeed rise again: but we shall not be all changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible: and we shall be changed. For this corruption must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Now the sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Church very properly reminds us in to-day's Epistle of those sublime words of the great Apostle, pointing to the future glorious resurrection of the bodies of the just, and while comforting us when meditating upon death and the corruption of the grave, she also earnestly exhorts us to overcome in this mortal life sin and all temptations to sin, in order that we may indulge in the comforting hope of gloriously rising hereafter with the chosen on the great day of judgment, and of entering with them the land of the living.

The declaration of the Apostle, *the power of sin is the law*, is not to be understood as if the law caused or promoted sin, but that through the law sin is recognized as such, and that for this reason, since man is instructed by the law as to what is commanded and what forbidden, his sin and guilt must necessarily increase if he, notwithstanding this knowledge, violates the law, and acts wickedly.

GOSPEL.—John 5 : 25—29.

"At that time, Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews: Amen, amen I say unto you, that the hour has cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so he hath given to the Son also to have life in himself: And he hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man. Wonder not at this; for the hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good,

shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment."

The Church, with the Saviour's own words, reminds us of the great truth of the coming resurrection of all bodies departed to a new life, at which time, however, only those who have done good, will rise gloriously to a life of blissful and everlasting happiness, whereas those who have done evil will come forth unto the resurrection of severe judgment, when eternal damnation awaits them.

On the vigil of All-Souls, and on the day itself, pious Christians go sometimes in solemn processions to visit the cemeteries, singing mournful hymns, and offering up prayers for the departed. This is a very beautiful and Christian custom, a beautiful expression of the communion of Saints, and not less beneficial to the living than the dead. For if the sight of so many tombs and monuments, raised by pious love to adorn the graves of the departed, reminds us most vividly of those whose mortal remains rest there, and exhorts us most earnestly to remember them in devout prayer; then the same sight, especially at the time of the year when all nature offers such a faithful picture of the fleeting character of all things of earth, calls not less impressively before our mind the great truth that we too, like our ancestors, who have yielded to the law of death, will soon fall into the corruption of the grave; the earnest word of the Lord: "For dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return" (Gen. 3 : 19), then speaks louder to the heart than in any other place; and this thought and the memory of the beloved dead must fill the heart of every mortal with sadness and melancholy. Yet with this sadness of the heart mingles also a sweet comfort, a holy joy in the Lord, when we consider the great truth of which the Church reminds us, that all who rest in the graves, if they departed this life in the grace of God, will hereafter rise to a new life, everlasting and immortal, to a life in union with God, and in bliss, infinite and inexpressible. In this regard St. Paul also says: "How do the dead rise again? or with what manner of body shall they come? It is sown in corruption: it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it shall rise in glory: it is sown in weakness; it shall rise in power: it is sown an animal body; it shall rise a spiritual body." (1 Corinthians 15 : 35; 42–44.)

ST. IDA.

(November 3.)

"Acquisition of the Soul."

Six centuries have passed since Henry, Count of Toggenburgh, and his wife, lived in perfect harmony and happiness. At their marriage, he gave her a ring, of Arabian gold, which she one day unfortunately lost. Without her knowledge a raven had carried it to his nest. Soon after, a huntsman passing by a fir-tree, heard a loud croaking, and looking up, he saw a nest of ravens. Climbing the tree, he found the ring, and wore it publicly. The servants of the Count, seeing the ring on his finger, suspected him of having had sinful intercourse with the Countess. The Count sent for the huntsman, and seeing the ring on the huntsman's finger, became assured of his wife's infidelity. He had the huntsman tied to the tail of a horse, which was driven down a steep and stony hill, so that the poor man was torn to pieces. He then went to his wife's room, and threw her out of the window, down an abyss of about 800 feet, thinking her death certain.

In Psalm 90, however, we read: "For he hath given his angels charge over thee, in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Ps. 90: 11.) Ida remained unhurt, although precipitated into such a terrible abyss. She fell upon her knees, praised and thanked God for having saved her from sudden death, saying: "Eternal and merciful God, I am filled with gratitude towards Thee for having preserved me in such a miraculous manner; I offer up to Thee my soul and my body; I will leave my parents and friends, the pleasures and the pomps of the world; I will choose poverty instead of riches, continency instead of marriage, in order to serve Thee the more." She commenced to lead a severe life in the wilderness; the hard earth was her bed, herbs and roots her food. Having lived thus for many years in the desert, a huntsman was, by Divine providence, led into this desert, where he found an humble hut covered with branches and moss; entering he found a woman sitting there in the greatest want, and with her eyes upon the ground, absorbed as it were, in God; and to his great astonishment recognized her as the wife of his master. He saluted her, and after a short conversation, returned in all haste to the Count, in order to inform him what he had seen. The Count, unable to credit his story, resolved to go himself, in company with the huntsman, to the hut of Ida, where they found her, in rags, as if she had been the most humble servant of the Count—who, terrified at the looks of his innocent wife, acknowledged his guilt, and asked her pardon. The Countess said to him: "Dear Count, may the Almighty forgive us all our sins; for we are in need of His grace and mercy." The Count, filled with both sorrow and joy, embraced his

wife, and begged her to return with him to the castle; and at the same time he promised to reward her abundantly for all her sufferings. Ida, however, said: "After you expelled me, and Almighty God preserved me so wonderfully, I offered to Him my whole life, to serve Him alone in this world, and therefore I no longer wish to return to the joys and cares of the world." She then begged the Count to build her a small hut, where she could lead a life of seclusion until her death. With a sad heart he granted her request, and asking her where she wished to live, she selected a spot near the convent of Fishingen, and near a chapel dedicated to the Mother of God. While living there, she refused any assistance from her husband, but preferred to receive alms from good and pious persons, which, however, she divided among the poor; she was so humble in her conversation, in her dress and manner, that no one would have imagined her to be a Countess; she was constantly engaged in prayer, meditation, fasting and watching. She died as she had lived, in the happy state of loving God above all things, and was buried at Fishingen.

Many meditations could be made upon St. Ida's life. If Almighty God in a singular manner leads you to enter upon a state of life which persons of the greatest piety have embraced only after many struggles with themselves, and solely to obtain heaven, then learn not to abandon your holy resolution to serve God. If, for instance, you have been sick for some time, in consequence of which you were not able to frequent bad company and indulge in wicked pleasures, follow up the same manner of living as soon as God restores you to health; or if you have been poor, and obliged to work hard for your support, abandon not your former economy and industry, if you become rich or inherit a large fortune.

BLESSED FRANCES.

(November 4.)

"Forgiveness of Injuries."

A TRULY Christian life is one and threefold. One, because the true Christian possesses the love of Christ within himself, because his whole life refers to God; threefold as it consists in combat against sin, in the practice of good works, and in patiently enduring sufferings. This unity of loving God above all things, and this trinity of being free from sin, of doing that which is good, and suffering that which is evil, are always seen together, wherever the spirit of Christ is reigning. They were found in the life of the blessed Duchess Frances, who died 375 years ago, on this day.

Frances, when very young, was married to Peter, Duke of Brittany, with whom she lived in the state of virginity, and by austerity, prayer, and almsgiving, she endeavored to persevere in her holy determination. The noble pair had lived already several years in perfect harmony, when their peace was destroyed by jealousy. One of the servants of the Duke told him, that his wife showed a special affection for one of the pages. This slanderer made the falsehood so plausible, that the Duke, filled with anger, rushed into his wife's apartment, and beat her most cruelly. She was not allowed to leave the room, and a servant carried her meals to her. With deep sorrow, but with Christian resignation and patience, Frances endured this ill-treatment for many weeks; she finally became very sick and desired to see her Confessor, to whom she revealed the whole affair, whereupon he went to the Duke, and so convinced him of the injustice of his suspicions, that he returned with the Confessor to the bedside of the Duchess, accusing himself amid many tears, of the injury he had inflicted upon her. The Duchess embraced, excused and consoled him, in the kindest manner, and from that time they again dwelt together in peace and harmony.

Having lived fifteen years with Frances, in perfect happiness, the Duke died; his successor, incited by slanderers, unjustly deprived the widow of all her estates; so that, despised and persecuted, she dwelt with the poor, and spent her time visiting the churches, and doing other good works. Two years after, the Duke who had treated Frances so cruelly, falling dangerously ill and dying, his successor restored to the widow all her former estates. At a later period, her relatives, and the King of France also, endeavored to persuade Frances, who was only thirty-two years old, to marry the Duke of Savoy, but she refused; for she had determined to found a Carmelite convent, where she could remain until her death. She therefore gathered around her many pious virgins, and instructed them, and when the convent was finished, and the Carmelite nuns had arrived to take possession of it, Frances also was received as a novice. The Prioress desired that Frances, on account of her noble birth, and as the foundress of the convent, should take her place next to her; but Frances refused, saying that if she wanted honor, she would have remained in the world; that Christ had taught her the way of humility, which she intended to follow.

The pious widow lived for eighteen years in the convent, and her favorite occupation was nursing the sick, although she had, against her will, become the Prioress of the convent. When attacked by disease, and convinced that she could not recover, she called the nuns around her, and said: "Dear sisters, the time has come when I must part from you; what I have often said to you, I now repeat: Endeavor to love God above all things, and be faithful to Him. Labor for the honor of God and not for worldly considerations. In your troubles remember, that the Almighty permits them in order to increase your glory. Be humble, charitable, pure, and keep your vows. Above all, love

one another, and persevere in peace and harmony. Farewell, my daughters!" She then gave them her blessing and received the last sacraments.

Having thus prepared herself for eternity, she had the Passion of Christ read to her, and at the words: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit;" —she died. Eighty-seven years after her death, the coffin was opened, and she lay there without the slightest mark of corruption being visible in her body.

ST. EMERIC.

(November 5.)

"Inheritance of Good or Evil Dispositions."

St. Stephen, King of Hungary, called also the Apostle of Hungary, on account of his zeal in spreading the Catholic faith throughout the whole kingdom, had a son, named Emeric, who in his earliest youth gave evidence of wonderful piety; he would rise at midnight, and read the Psalms, and at the end of each Psalm ask pardon of God for his sins. The father, with holy joy, often watched the pious exercises of his son.

Once, when St. Stephen went with Emeric to visit the abbey of St. Martin, the monks, who desired to receive them with every mark of respect, met them in procession. St. Stephen not wishing to accept any honors, sent his son to meet them and to salute them in his name. The monks paid their homage to the prince, and Emeric, in order to show them his veneration and love, kissed them all; but it was a matter of surprise that he kissed some of them more than he did others, and one of the monks, named Maurus, no less than seven times. The king asked him why he had done so, when Emeric said that the monks were all pious and virtuous, but not in the same degree; that he had given the most kisses to the most pious, among whom was Maurus, because he excelled all the others in perfection.

The king, to be certain of what his son said, went two days after to the abbey in company with two of his nobles to acquaint himself with the character of the monks. At midnight the matins were chanted, and the pious king also attended them, and he saw how some of the monks after matins returned to their cells; others remained in the church in order to spend the rest of the night in prayer. They were those who had received more kisses than the others, and the king, approaching them kindly, saluted them; they at once returned his salutation, and offered him their homage. In coming, however, to Maurus, whom Emeric had kissed seven times, the king found that the holy monk paid

no attention to what he said, but continued his devotions; whereupon St. Stephen threatened to punish him in case he again refused to answer him.

The following day the king revisited the abbey, and in order to try Maurus in another manner, he reproached him in the presence of all the monks as if he were a disorderly and wicked monk. Maurus would not defend himself, but received the reproaches with humility, although he was perfectly innocent. The king was now convinced that his son Emeric, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, had estimated every one of them according to his merit.

In visiting one day the church of St. George, Emeric, kneeling down before the altar of St. George, consulted, while praying, what sacrifice would be most pleasing to God, when he heard a voice, saying: "Virginity is a most praiseworthy virtue, which you should offer up to God." He invoked the divine assistance to destroy in him all impure desires and sinful lusts. As he was the heir apparent, his father wished him to marry; having, however, made the promise to God not to marry, Emeric was not pleased with his father's request, but finally consented, upon the constant entreaties of his royal father; and, although he was obedient to him, he resolved not to violate the vow of chastity which he had made to God. He was married to a virtuous princess, with whom he lived as a brother. He, however, died soon after his marriage, and his father, St. Stephen, was filled with sorrow, as he had hoped to have in him an excellent successor; but he consoled himself by thinking that Emeric, while in heaven, could procure more and greater blessings upon the country than if he had remained upon earth.

A great miracle is said to have happened on the grave of St. Emeric, after his father had also died in the odor of sanctity. A German, named Conrad, on account of his great crimes, had gone to Rome in order to make his confession, and he asked the Pope to impose a heavy penance upon him. The penance he received was to visit the graves of the great Saints, bound with a heavy chain until it dropped off. Conrad cheerfully received this penance, and on his visits to the tombs of the different Saints, he came also to Hungary to the grave of St. Stephen, where he hoped to be freed not only from the chains, but also from all his sins. After having prayed for some time, he fell asleep, when St. Stephen appeared to him, saying that he should visit the next grave, which was that of his son, St. Emeric. Conrad awoke, and did as he had been commanded in his dream, and, behold, as soon as he had approached the grave of St. Emeric, the chains dropped off.

In the life of St. Emeric it becomes evident that the good dispositions of parents are inherited by their children; but at the same time bad habits are also. Married people should remember this, and endeavor to lead moral and Christian lives.

ST. EMILIAN.

(November 6.)

"Conscience."

Emilian was born of poor parents, at Riossa, in Spain, and when young watched the flocks of his father. While thus engaged he amused himself with playing on a shepherd's pipe, the music of which must have been very disagreeable to strange ears, although to his simple and childlike heart it seemed to be truly heavenly. Once, while playing, he fell asleep, and he beheld visions of supernatural beauty and loveliness which filled his heart with consolation and joy, so that when he awoke a great desire to possess them remained, and he began to despise the world, wishing to know and hear nothing but of God and heaven.

He therefore forsook his shepherd life, and went to Felix, a pious hermit, to learn how to love and serve God, and detest the world. Felix received him with all kindness, and instructed him in Christian perfection. Emilian, assisted by the grace of God, made rapid progress in virtue and sanctity, and when sufficiently instructed, took leave of his master, and went into another desert, where he continued the practice of a holy life. After a short time, however, his place of seclusion was discovered, and many came to see him. Fearing to be disturbed or too much honored by them, he retired to a high mountain, where he could not be molested by any one

Emilian here led a life of perfect seclusion, and for the space of forty years his abode remained unknown to the world. We, who live in the world, can hardly form an idea of the life of a soul cut off from all intercouse with man, meditating upon and loving God alone. It is in reality but the beginning upon earth of a heavenly life, which guards us from innumerable cares, troubles, and sorrows, and which gives inward joys unknown to the busy men of this world.

Emilian lived fourteen hundred years ago, so that we are not conversant with many of the events of his life; it appears, however, that as he went from time to time to the Episcopal city of Tarragona, in order to receive the holy Sacraments, Bishop Dydimus became acquainted with him, and he justly considered that it would be a great acquisition for the Church if he could ordain Emilian a priest. Emilian at first entreated the Bishop to desist from his purpose, but finally submitted to his will, as to the will of God.

After being ordained, he was made Pastor of the city of Brigagia. The clergy of that place were greatly relaxed, and Emilian endeavored to introduce order and morality among them; but he met with great opposition and resistance, and some accused him to the Bishop of having squandered the property of

the Church, and of being consequently unfit to be the Pastor. The weak Bishop believed the slanderers, reproached St. Emilian, and deposed him.

The Saint was not grieved by this unjust treatment; on the contrary, his humility and patience became greater, and, staff in hand, he left the city as he had entered it, concealed himself in the woods near the city, and commenced anew his former devotions, as if nothing had happened to him. He reached the age of one hundred years, and Almighty God, in order to increase his reward for heaven, afflicted him with dropsy and other diseases, to which he himself added severe penances. Towards the end of his life the Lord revealed to him that he would destroy the surrounding country on account of the many crimes of the inhabitants; and when the aged Saint warned the people, and entreated them to do penance, they mocked at him. Among them was a priest, named Abundantius, who accused the Saint of being childish; but Emilian said: "You, Abundantius, shall be the first on whom my prophecy shall be fulfilled." This happened also, for the priest died very suddenly.

When death approached, St. Emilian invited a pious priest to attend him, and in his arms he breathed his last. Afterwards a monastery was built where the Saint had lived, and in many cities of Castile churches were erected to the honor of St. Emilian.

THE VENERABLE BALDINUZZI.

(November 7.)

"Image of Christ."

THE venerable Father Baldinuzzi, of the Society of Jesus, lived in Italy, and labored principally in giving missions. He died in the year 1717, on the 7th day of November. Before we speak of his missions, we will first show you, dear reader, in what state his own soul was, from which so many blessings proceeded for others.

Even when a child, he could not endure to have any part of his body uncovered; he made a resolution never to look upon a woman; he was as modest while dressing or undressing, as though he were surrounded by a crowd of persons. His soul was so innocent, and his love for chastity so great, that animated by his example, others were induced to lead a pure life. A clergyman, who knew him, said that Father Baldinuzzi was more careful to conceal his virtues, than the greatest deceiver was to conceal his wickedness, and that the proudest persons did not hate and despise humiliations as much as Baldinuzzi did honors and praises. Although naturally irritable

and impetuous, he overcame his passions by constant self-denial, so that he showed extraordinary meekness; and injuries, which would have provoked even the meekest person, could not disturb the quiet and peace of his soul. He often wished to die, but not that he might be freed from afflictions, but only to escape the danger of offending God; he was very kind to the sick and poor, and would devote all his leisure time to their assistance. It will, therefore, be easily understood, that the missions, given by such a holy man, must have been very successful. He came to places where persons had absented themselves, for many years, from the sacraments, where many married persons lived separated or in adultery, where murders were frequent, where blasphemy and calumny, fraud and malice, was universally practiced, where priests were abused, and men declared that they would rather be lost forever, than forgive their enemies. The changes produced there by Father Baldinuzzi were wonderful. There was no kind of sin which the missions of this blessed man did not destroy. He planted a crucifix near him, when he was preaching, and invited all who were filled with hatred or enmity against their neighbor to forgive them in the presence of Him, who suffered death rather than revenge Himself.

Father Baldinuzzi endeavored to preserve the fruits of his missions, which is a most difficult and important task; he tried to remove the occasions and inducements to sin, such as gambling-houses, dances, extravagance in dress, night-revelling, and the company of wicked persons. He introduced rosary and other societies, instead of sinful amusements on Sundays and holydays, and kept up a friendly correspondence with the most prominent persons of the place where he had given missions, in order to protect and preserve the golden fruits of the holy mission.

A robber was once to be executed in Rome, who refused to confess; the Pope then asked Father Baldinuzzi to visit the criminal, and to make an effort to save his soul. The Father went barefoot to the prison, and without much trouble converted the poor sinner; he accompanied him to the place of execution, and removed his body, as no one else would touch it. The whole country was filled with robbers, who determined to liberate their comrade; the blessed priest went fearlessly among them, and spoke so impressively to the men, that penetrated with sorrow and shame, they returned to God.

While giving his last mission he was suffering from fever, but he nevertheless preached and heard confessions, until he could no longer stand. After a few weeks of patient suffering and of resignation to the will of God, his pure soul enjoyed the bliss of heaven.

BLESSED MARY OF ST. TERESA.

(November 8.)

"Spiritual Alms."

THE parents of blessed Mary sent her to an Ursaline Convent. Although somewhat worldly, she entered the novitiate, but did not make her religious profession until the end of the third year, because the Superior was not certain whether she had a vocation or not. At that time a jubilee was proclaimed, and Mary resolved to make a general confession on that occasion, which was the means of rousing her soul from its slumber and spiritual indifference. She became a new creature, and endeavored to attain Christian perfection; her spirit was continually directed to the presence of God, and she often spent whole nights in prayer. When her superiors sought to discover if her piety was real, and proceeded from the Holy Ghost, she showed such humility and obedience, that her sanctity was placed beyond all doubt. Her spiritual superiors could not sufficiently admire her inspirations regarding the mysteries of the life and passion of Christ; but with all her knowledge, she was as modest as a simple child. She despised no one as much as she did herself, and her disposition was so evenly balanced, that whatever befell her, she received as if coming from God.

The penances of this pious virgin were as austere, as though she had to atone for the most grievous sins; she wore upon her body a cross made of tin, one foot long, having sharp points, penetrating her flesh; the scourge with which she mortified her body, had sharp points attached to it; she slept on boards, and often fasted on bread and water. She never murmured in adversity, but prayed to God never to leave her without sufferings, while upon the earth, where our Saviour had suffered so much.

The spirit of true Christianity, that is love, was shown by this pious Religious, first in being filled with devotion to the most Blessed Eucharist; she received holy communion as often as she could, and she frequently visited the Blessed Sacrament, feeling there more and more incited to love and veneration. She evinced her Christian love, also, by her conduct towards her neighbors; she was so kind, agreeable and willing, that she cheerfully used every opportunity to assist others.

The Superior of the convent was taken dangerously sick, and the thought of the judgment of God, which awaited her after death, filled her with terror, and she had also a great dread of purgatory. Blessed Mary, seeing this, implored God to inflict upon her the pains of purgatory, which the Superior had deserved. Mary was soon after seized with fever, but nevertheless she continued her severe penances, until commanded not to do so. Her whole body

was so feeble, that for three months she could not move herself, and it was necessary to nurse her like a little child, in consequence of which, the sisters, who had to watch her alternately every other night, soon became tired, and would sometimes leave her alone; even her confessor would remain but a moment, not consoling her sometimes with one word.

To this affliction was added the most violent temptations of the Evil one, so that out of fear she would often cry out for assistance. She was for two months in a dying condition, and once, when the prayers were being read to her, her countenance became so distorted, that all those who were present were seized with fear and horror, and when asked by the Confessor, why she had done so, she said, that the evil spirit desired to make her despair, and that she had to combat against him. On the third day, she gave up her pure soul into the hands of her Creator.

In the life of Blessed Mary, we see, that Almighty God transferred the punishment which the sick Superior would have had to suffer in purgatory, upon this pious sister. As Catholics, under one head, Jesus Christ, we form one spiritual body; and, therefore, we can apply penances, prayer, good works, and merits, to others, which is truly a work of mercy, a spiritual alms; and we thereby imitate our Saviour, who applied all his good works and sufferings to us. Be, therefore, a true follower of Christ, and give generously of the merits which you have obtained from the Almighty; to pray, fast, give alms and practice other meritorious works for yourself alone, is a mark of religious selfishness.

ST. THEODORE.

(November 9.)

"Invocation of the Saints."

St. Theodore, although very young, became a Roman soldier, and was attached to a legion which at that time had their winter-quarters at Amasea. Just then, A. D. 306, in a terrible persecution of the Christians, the emperor ordered every Christian either to sacrifice to the gods or die. Theodore, notwithstanding his youth, showed the courage and firmness of a veteran; Christian faith seemed to be openly stamped on his brow. When asked to sacrifice, he declared before his legion that he was a Christian, and would not sacrifice to the gods. Brincas, the superior officer, kindly urged him to obey, and sacrifice; but Theodore replied that he was a soldier of his King Jesus Christ, and that he knew

no other God; "for," he added, "this is my religion and my belief, for which I am ready to suffer, although you tear my flesh, burn me, or put me to death." All present were astonished at the young soldier and his desire for martyrdom, and the judge dismissed him, thinking that after a few days he would consent. The Saint, however, continually prayed to the Lord.

The pagans meanwhile turned their anger towards some Christian inhabitants of Amasea, seized them, and put them into prison. St. Theodore followed them, recommending them to patience and perseverance, exhorting them not to deny Christ. In Amasea there was a temple of Cybele, called by the pagans the mother of the gods; this temple Theodore destroyed by setting fire to it, and although it happened during the night, he tried not to conceal it; on the contrary, he made it public himself, so that when the governor, named Publius, heard of it, he had Theodore arrested as an incendiary, and asked him why he had done so. Theodore answering, said: "I do not deny that I committed the deed; I have burned your temple and the perishable goddess, both made of wood." The governor commanded him to be scourged, and threatened to inflict greater punishment if he did not obey the will of the emperor. "I will not obey," replied Theodore. "I fear not your punishment; for all your torments are as nothing; Jesus Christ, my Lord and my King, is my protector."

The governor endeavored to win him over by promises, which, however, were also rejected; whereupon the governor commanded his sides to be torn open with iron claws; but the martyr remained firm, singing at the same time: "I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall be always in my mouth." (Ps. 33 : 2.) Astonished at such courage, the governor said: "O shame that, miserable as you are, you place confidence in the man whom you call Christ, and who was crucified so ignominiously, and shame on you that you suffer so foolishly for Him." The holy martyr, however, said: "It is a shame in which I glory, and in which all those who invoke the name of Jesus also glory."

St. Theodore was then carried back to the prison, and when, after a few days, he was again tortured, the people, seeing his fortitude, cried out, with a loud voice: "Kill him!" when the governor sentenced him to be burned. At the place of execution he made the sign of the cross upon his forehead, and upon different parts of his body, ascended the pile, and in peace gave up his spirit. A pious Christian, named Eusebia, asked for his body, embalmed him, and had him honorably buried; she afterwards also obtained martyrdom.

Every year a festival was celebrated on his grave, and on one occasion St. Gregory of Nyssa preached a panegyric which is still extant. As Protestants maintain that the veneration and invocation of the Saints does not belong to Christianity, we will give an extract of his sermon, showing thereby what Christians in that time already believed and practiced concerning the Saints. St. Gregory says: "People of Christ, holy troop, royal priesthood, assembled here from all parts of the city and country, who has invited you to come hither?

Evidently the holy martyr and soldier Theodore, to lead you not to battle, but to sweet peace, so becoming to Christians. See, therefore, friends and lovers of the holy martyrs, how the just even in this world are rewarded. The venerable and unstained body, the instrument of that soul which was never stained with sin, is honored here, and kept like a precious treasure for the time of resurrection. What a great difference exists, therefore, in comparison with the manner in which other bodies are treated who have died in a natural manner; for to many such bodies are an object of terror, and no one wishes to pass by their graves; and whoever, by mere chance, would open such a grave, would be filled with horror, and would turn away, sighing over the nothingness of man; but he who visits the grave of the just and his holy relics, as we do on this day, will joyfully meditate upon the glorious deeds of the martyr, and will consider how much he has combatted and suffered; and he is the happiest who is allowed to touch the sacred relics; for those who are permitted to approach the holy martyr, embrace him as if he were a living body, touch him with their lips, eyes, and forehead, shed tears of compassion and love, and invoke him as the companion of God, who could obtain for them whatever they ask of him. Learn from this, pious people, how precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints. (Ps. 115 : 15.) Come, therefore, O holy martyr, and preside at this festival, come to thy friends, for we are in need of assistance; we fear tribulation and dangers, the cruel Scythians prepare war against us; as a soldier combat for us, as a martyr intercede for us; obtain peace for us, that these feasts may never cease, that the barbarians may not destroy the temples and altars. Thou hast so far kept us from affliction, we ask thy protection for the future also. If, however, greater assistance should be necessary, assemble the choir of thy brethren, the martyrs, and pray with them for us that idolatry may not rise up against us, that heresies may not grow in the vineyard of the Lord, and the cockle may not choke the divine seed. O wonderful martyr, shining above all other martyrs, would that through the power of thy intercession, and that of thy companions, Christianity may become a rich field, bringing forth glorious fruits of eternal life, the life in Christ, our Lord. Amen."

ST. ANDREW AVELLINO.

(November 10.)

"Profitable use of time."

St. Andrew Avellino, when a student, was very pious and virtuous. On account of his great beauty he was often tempted by wicked women, but he showed the same firmness and determination as did Joseph of Egypt, and made the vow of perpetual chastity in order to be safe against further temptations. After making the proper studies, he joined the Oratorians.

Avellino had such a hatred against idleness that he never allowed one moment to pass away without making profitable use of it, and he never spoke an idle word; he was, therefore, called the tyrant of time, and always carried with him an hour-glass, which served to remind him how rapidly time was passing away, and that he should make the best use of it, for which reason he divided it between God, his neighbor, and himself. He regretted the time he was obliged to spend upon the care of his person, and envied the Angels of heaven, who, free from all care of their body and from sleep, spend all their time in seeing, loving, and praising God. He disliked to see others idle, and whenever he heard any one engaged in foolish talk, he would kindly admonish him to do better. He frequently said that Christians had no greater enemy than idleness, from which all evil proceeds; that three things were especially displeasing to God—lukewarmness, distraction, and idleness; and that if we have to give an account for every idle word we speak, how much more so for every moment of lost time, since one moment can secure to us eternal happiness. The Saint once called to see a penitent of his, in whose company he found some noblemen playing cards, and he reproached them for it; and when they commenced to excuse themselves by saying that they did not play for money, but merely to pass away the time, St. Avellino, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed: "Alas, alas! to many time seems so long, while to me it is so short."

After speaking thus, he hurriedly left them, and the noblemen rose from the table, determined to spend their time in doing something more profitable. The Saint slept only four hours, in order to give more time to prayer and works of charity. When he could not sleep at the usual time, and became sleepy when he should rise, he said to his body: "When I wanted to sleep, you would not; now that you wish to sleep, I shall not; rise at once!" St. Avellino lived sixty years after his ordination, and during that whole time he never omitted to say Mass every day unless prevented by sickness. He spent one hour in preparation, and one hour in making his thanksgiving after Mass; "for," said he, "this divine food will only be nourishing when it is seasoned by a careful meditation upon the sufferings of Christ."

St. Andrew Avellino had a great number of penitents; he was the first and the last in the confessional, and would never let any one wait for him. He was once sent for on a sick-call, and as it rained very hard, he was advised to wait until the shower was over; but he said that he did not object to a few drops of water falling upon him if he could only save a soul, for which our Redeemer had shed His blood.

One day he rode on a mule to a neighboring village to accomplish some works of mercy, when the animal became unmanageable, and ran away; St. Andrew was thrown down, but one foot remained in the stirrup, so that he was dragged along for some distance. He hardly escaped with his life, and when his companion persuaded him to return home, and to send for a physician to dress his wounds, he said: "No, no, I do not wish to deceive my Lord, for this morning at Mass I asked for the grace of being allowed to suffer something for the benefit of some poor soul." He never could be prevented by any sickness from practicing works of mercy.

The great and indefatigable zeal of St. Andrew was shown in a wonderful manner at Picenza, whither his Bishop had sent him in order to settle troubles existing there. By his example, preaching, and prayers, he effected a great change; the priests became obedient, and the people, who formerly indulged in extravagant dresses, became modest and attentive to their religious duties.

Men die as they live. Andrew, who in his long life—he was eighty-eight years of age when he died—had never spent one idle moment, was destined also to be active in his holy vocation until his end. Enlightened from above, he had predicted that he would die on the tenth day of November. He prayed the whole night, and then, although very feeble, went to the church to say Mass. When at the altar, he became so weak that he was advised to return to the sacristy. But he wished to say Mass; he made the sign of the cross, and said: "*Introibo at altare Dei*," (I will go unto the altar of God,) and as the altar-boy did not answer, he repeated the words; but when for the third time he desired to say them, he was struck with paralysis, carried in the sacristy, received the holy Sacraments, and died at midnight.

ST. MARTIN OF TOURS.

(November 11.)

FROM BAYERLE.

"Light from Heaven,"

ST. MARTIN of Tours (in France), one of the most celebrated saints and shining lights of the Church, was born in 315 or 316, at Sabaria, in Hungary, and educated in Pavia (a city of Upper Italy), where his father was Tribune of the Roman army. His parents were gentiles, but he desired to become a Christian when very young, and in his tenth year was admitted as a catechumen. At sixteen, he was obliged to enter the Roman cavalry, where he served for five years, always manifesting a noble and pious mind and leading a pure life. Once, on an extremely cold winter day, while he was standing before the gate of Amiens (in France), a man in rags came up begging. His comrades paid no attention to the beggar, but Martin, who was then seventeen, felt compassion for the man, and as he had nothing else to give, drew his sword and cut his military cloak in two, giving the beggar one half and keeping the other for himself. The following night, he saw in a vision, our Saviour wearing the half of the cloak he had given the beggar, and heard Him say to the Angels that surrounded him: "Martin, who is yet a catechumen, has provided me with this garment." Soon after, Martin was baptized, and having served in the army for several years longer, he at last obtained his discharge. Later, he attached himself to the saintly Bishop Hilary of Poitiers, who, because Martin in his humility refused the deaconship, admitted him into the number of his inferior clergy. In the year 356, he went to Illyria, for the purpose of converting his parents, and he succeeded in gaining his mother and several others over to Christ. The Arians, however, who prevailed in Illyria, soon obliged him to leave the country, and after he had undergone a similar fate in other places, he returned in 360 to Poitiers, and founded a monastery, not far from the city, the first in France. The reputation of his great holiness and power of working miracles, soon spread far and near, and when the saintly Bishop Eutherius of Tours died, in the year 371, Martin was against his wish unanimously chosen his successor.

Martin continued, as Bishop, his former simple and most rigid manner of living, in community with his monks, disciples, and faithful associates; but fulfilled also with the greatest zeal the duties of his Episcopal office. He was an indefatigable preacher and confessor, and continually occupied with the spiritual welfare of those confided to his care; but his pious efforts were especially directed to the country people, who up to that time had been greatly neglected, and many of whom were still wandering in the gloomy darkness of paganism.

He became in truth their Apostle, uprooted idolatry, built churches, and propagated the light of the truth and of Christian faith. Not less zealous, and frequently with the most blessed results for justice and truth, were his efforts with the imperial court, then at Treves (in Germany).

He undertook, even at the great age of eighty-five, a journey to the most extreme point of his Diocese. Here he was taken dangerously ill; and when his disciples, a number of whom accompanied him as usual, wept, and implored him not to leave them, Martin, touched by their attachment, prayed as follows: "Lord, if thy people are still in need of me, I refuse not to take upon myself the burden; nevertheless, Thy will be done." Shortly after, the Saint died, lying on a couch covered with ashes, on the eleventh day of November, in the year 400 (according to others 397). He was buried with every honor at Tours, his Episcopal city, and numberless miracles worked at his grave, irrefutably manifested his holiness. He was the first, who as a Confessor, was numbered among the saints venerated by the Church, an honor formerly shown only to martyrs; but of which Martin was justly regarded worthy, for the holiness of his life and the greatness of his miracles.

St. Martin is also venerated as the patron of fields; whence the ancient custom of lighting bonfires in the fields and on mountains at the end of the harvest, which occurred on the feast of this Saint, as a manifestation of thanksgiving to the Saint who by his intercession protected the fields from damage done by the weather and other hurtful influences. This is also the origin of the still existing children's festival, in Germany, on the evening of St. Martin's day, when the children march joyfully, with colored lanterns, through the streets, and are presented with fruit and the like. It was formerly, and in many places is still, customary for the country people to pay the rent due churches, convents and manorial estates, about the time of Martinmas, to which dues they generally added some present, consisting chiefly of poultry (especially geese). Hence the origin of the custom, the *Martinmas goose.*

Introit of the Holy Mass is the same as on *St. Peter's Day* (January 18).

PRAYER.

"O God, who seest that we cannot subsist by any strength of our own, mercifully grant that by the intercession of blessed Martin, thy Confessor and Bishop, we may be protected against all adversity." Through our Lord.

EPISTLE.—Eccles. 44: 17, 21, 25, 26; 45: 3, 8, 19.

"Behold a great priest, who in his days pleased God and was found just, and in the time of wrath he was made a reconciliation. There was not found the like to him who preserved the law of the Most High. Therefore by an oath the Lord gave him glory in his posterity. He gave him the blessing of all

nations, and confirmed his covenant upon his head. He acknowledged him in his blessings, he preserved for him his mercy: and he found grace before the eyes of the Lord. He glorified him in the sight of kings, and gave him a crown of glory. He made an everlasting covenant with him, and gave him the great priesthood, and made him blessed in glory. To execute the office of the priesthood, and to have praise in his name, and to offer him due incense for an odor of sweetness."

These words, once spoken under the old dispensation, in praise of the great high-priests, Aaron and his grandson Phineas, are, with not less propriety, applied by our holy Church to St. Martin and many other saintly Bishops (in the Epistles of their feasts), to show thereby, that these holy men discharged not less gloriously the office of high-priest, according to the new dispensation, and therefore obtained honor and recognition in the eyes of God, and eternal glory in His kingdom.

Gospel.—Luke 11: 33–36.

"No man lighteth a candle, and putteth it into a hidden place, nor under a bushel: but upon a candlestick, that they that come in may see the light. The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be single, thy whole body will be lightsome: but if it be evil, thy body also will be darksome. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If then thy whole body be lightsome having no part of darkness; the whole shall be lightsome, and as a bright lamp shall enlighten thee."

By the light which, put upon the candlestick, shall be seen by all men, the Saviour means Himself, the heavenly light, (as He also calls himself in other passages of the sacred writings) by which all men, enlightened by Him, shall obtain the right knowledge and veneration of God, and thus follow the true road leading to salvation. But besides this true heavenly light, which is Himself, he speaks of the light, that nourished by the heavenly light, shall shine in every individual man; and calls our attention to the important truth that as the body is only kept in the right direction by a sound eye, thus also, only a heart pure and looking towards God, is able to give to all the thoughts, inclinations and actions of man, the right direction leading to his eternal welfare.

The Church most appropriately reminds us of this saying of the Lord upon the feast of St. Martin. For this great servant of God was indeed so wholly enlightened by the heavenly light that guides man in the religion of Christ, that all the thoughts and inclinations of his heart, all the efforts and actions of his whole life, always referred to God, the promotion of His honor, and the doing of His holy will; and also because he himself may justly be regarded as a light that, put upon the candlestick, that is, elevated to a high office in the Church of Christ, shone far and wide, by word and example. He also, by his blessed

labors, propagated the light of the true Catholic faith, and thus in reality was a light to many men, enabling them to find the right way which leads to life everlasting.

ST. MARTIN, POPE.

(November 12.)

"Conflict between Church and State."

In the time of this Saint the Roman emperors resided at Constantinople, and although they were Christians, many of them, like the emperor of Russia now, wished to govern the Church also, and to make laws for her; and as the Pope would not allow such interference, many troubles arose. The heresy had just sprung up that Christ had only one will, and not a divine and human will united. Pope Martin, therefore, in the year 649, called a general council, at which were present five hundred Bishops, who, after mature consideration, declared the doctrine heretical, and excommunicated whoever maintained it. The Emperor Constans, on the other hand, issued a decree in which he commanded that nothing should be mentioned in the churches about the excommunication, and when he heard that Pope Martin opposed the heresy with all his power, he commissioned an officer of high rank, named Olympius, either to take the Pope prisoner, or to put him to death. Olympius, not deeming it advisable to use open force, sent a servant to put Martin to death; but the servant averred that when in the act of doing so, the holy Pope at once disappeared. Olympius who sought in vain to terrify the Pope and the Bishops, was obliged to go to Sicily, which province the Saracens had invaded; he was defeated in battle, mortally wounded, and died a few days after.

The Emperor Constans was the more embittered against the holy Pope, because he had excommunicated several Bishops who had refused to submit to the decrees of the council, and who were very servile to the Imperial court. Constans, therefore, sent another governor to Rome, who under the pretext that Pope Martin had been concerned in a plot against the emperor, had him arrested, and dragged on a ship like a felon. They purposely made a very slow passage in order to prolong the sufferings and privations of the holy Father, but finally landed on the island of Naxos, where St. Martin was kept over a year in prison, and suffered much from disease. He was at last brought to Constantinople, where he was cruelly treated. In a letter still extant, he writes: "For the last forty-seven days I have had no water to wash; I am almost frozen, and am very feeble; the food given me is miserable and loathsome; I trust, how-

ever, that God will take me soon from this world, and give the grace of repentance to my persecutors."

They had hoped that the venerable man would sink under this usage; but God preserved his life, and they were obliged to bring him to trial. The holy Pontiff could hardly move, and was, therefore, brought in on a litter. He was accused of treason in resisting the decree of the emperor. Twenty-four wicked men were ordered to swear to this fact, but St. Martin said to the judge: "These witnesses are false; you may listen to them, and pass your sentence upon me accordingly, but let them not take an oath by which they will ruin their souls." The judge then passed sentence upon the Saint, who was condemned to be deposed from his dignity as supreme Pontiff, and afterwards put to death. The emperor, however, fearing the wrath of the people, commuted the sentence of death, and exiled him to the Crimea.

He arrived there at a time when a great famine prevailed, and in one of his letters he says: "They speak of bread, but we see none; the inhabitants, although they are pagans, have charity, while my brethren of Italy have forgotten me. I will, however, continue, through St. Peter, to pray God to protect and preserve them in the Catholic faith. I trust that God in His mercy may soon put an end to my miserable life." His wish was soon fulfilled, for he died six months after he landed in the Crimea. He was first buried there, but his body was afterwards brought to Rome, and deposited in the church of St. Martin, (November 11). The emperor, thirteen years later, was accidentally killed by one of his servants. Constantinople is now in the hands of the Turks; but the Pope has his residence in Rome, and governs the whole Catholic Church even until now.

Dissensions still occur from time to time between the civil authorities and the clergy. The princes say: "You are bound to obey the government," and the conscientious priest says: "We ought to obey God rather than man." (Acts 5: 29.) The government is instituted by God, but only for the management of temporal affairs, and in this sense we must obey it; it has, however, no right to make laws for the Church, and if it does, we are not bound to obey it. We should suffer persecution rather than yield or become unfaithful to the decrees of the Catholic Church and her superiors and directors. The persecution may last a long time, but Almighty God will sooner or later grant victory and peace to His Church, for He promised to be with her even unto the consummation of the world.

ST. MAXELENDA.

(November 13.)

"Passion."

THIS Saint was born in the Netherlands, and was beautiful in soul and body; she was blessed with very pious parents, who gave her an excellent education. When she grew up, many young noblemen sought her in marriage; but as she showed an aversion to matrimony, her father dismissed them all. One day a young nobleman, named Harduin, was so much charmed by her beauty and modesty that he sought to win her parents first with entreaties, presents, and fair promises, and finally with threats, until they were at length compelled to consent, although Maxelenda knew nothing of their having done so.

Happier than if he had received all the treasures of earth, he hurried home, and made the greatest preparations for the wedding. Meanwhile the parents asked Maxelenda whether she was not willing to marry Harduin; they added that he was rich, handsome, and powerful, that they had maturely considered the affair, and had consented that she should become his wife; their only hope was that, like a good obedient daughter, she would not act contrary to the will of her parents.

Maxelenda was thunderstruck, and could not at first speak. Finally she recovered, and asked for one day to consider; she did not ask for time, because she was in doubt as to what she would say, but only to gather strength through the assistance of God to give a decided answer. She then went trembling to her room, remained all night in prayer, and asked God's assistance to preserve her virginity, which she had already vowed and offered up to Him; and Almighty God heard her prayer, and gave her to understand that He would protect her. The next morning she told her parents what she had resolved to do. With great respect, but also with great determination she said that it was very wrong in them to force her to accept a husband; she should have been first consulted about it, and that she would never marry either Harduin or any other man, since in her youth she had already chosen the Son of God for her bridegroom.

The parents' reply to these declarations of their daughter is not known, but it seems from the following that they persisted in their own determination. The day of the wedding came, and Harduin arrived with great pomp, dressed in garments embroidered with gold and pearls; a great many of his relatives accompanied him, and the retinue of attendants was almost numberless. The father now called his daughter Maxelenda, "for," said he, "This is the day of happiness, obedience, and paternal blessing." But Maxelenda refused to let the ceremony proceed, and would not even look at Harduin. The guests perceived

that Maxelenda would rather die than marry, and, therefore, returned home; she also retired, leaving Harduin standing alone, who, filled with shame, anger, and passion, could hardly master his feelings; but he too finally departed.

One day her parents went to a feast, leaving her at home alone; Harduin heard of it, and went secretly to the house, forced open the doors, and, having found her, fell upon his knees, and commenced to entreat, promise, and weep. But the virgin was as firm as a rock; she only said: "My bridegroom is Christ, and I am ready to die rather than to cease to be a virgin." Having spoken thus, she tried to make her escape; but Harduin, taking her by the neck, choked her with such force that the blood ran from her mouth, nose, eyes, and ears.

What caused this young nobleman to commit such an outrageous and wicked deed? Nothing but passion, which he mistook for love, and which ended in murder. The holy Scriptures say: "Sin begetteth death." (James 1 : 15.) If a man allows his unlawful appetites to obtain control over him, it is as if Satan himself had possession of his soul, carrying him along against his will, bringing ruin and death upon him, and often also upon others. How frequently have we seen improper intimacies result in the death of one or the other of the parties; how many have lost their lives through intemperance. Many, like Judas, have committed suicide, or have taken the lives of others for the sake of money, because money was their ruling passion. Man, therefore, should fear nothing as he does the giving way to passion, and he should watch and resist its onsets from the beginning.

After having put Maxelenda to death, Harduin became blind; his servants were horrified at this immediate and visible punishment of God, and they returned home at once.

While the parents were enjoying themselves at the house of their friends, the news came that their daughter had been murdered. Their joy was changed into grief, and when they all arrived at the house, they found the pious virgin lying dead upon the floor, and Harduin blind, and with bloody hands kneeling by her, lamenting and weeping over his rash act. Maxelenda was looked upon as a martyr, and her body was deposited in the church of SS. Peter and Paul, in the city of Cameric; but afterwards it was taken back to the house where she had been put to death, and there it happened that Harduin, who had been blind for three years, had his sight restored through the intercession of St. Maxelenda.

BLESSED BETHA.

(November 14.)

"Spiritual Life."

BLESSED BETHA is the name of a pious virgin, who lived in a small convent in the city of Renthe, Suavia. Her confessor wrote her biography, from which we make the following extract:

In the year 1386, Elizabeth, or Betha, was born, of pious and honest parents; she possessed a pure and simple heart, and was beloved by all. When fourteen years old, she was very beautiful, and excelled all her companions in modesty and holiness. She afterwards entered the third order of St. Francis; but not wishing to remain at home, she went to live with another sister of the same order; and when she had left her parents, who were incensed at her departure, she was without means of support, and had to suffer privation and hunger. Her confessor procured for her and some other sisters, a small convent at Renthe, near Waldsea, in order that they might serve God with more perfection. There she remained until her death.

Betha meditated upon the passion and death of Christ, even while at work. When spinning, she thought with great compassion, how Christ had been scourged and scoffed at by the unmerciful Jews; when carrying wood, she considered how Christ, forsaken by his friends, carried the cross with great patience to mount Calvary, like a lamb, for our salvation. At length she was seized with terrible pains, and blood issued from her left side. As her love for Christ daily increased, blood issued also from her hands and feet; her head was covered with wounds, as if she had worn a crown of thorns; and her whole body looked as if it had been scourged and beaten. The wounds of Christ were sometimes visible on her body six times a day, but more especially on Friday, and every day during Lent. Thus did Betha endure pains and sufferings until her death. When the blood ceased to issue from the wounds of her body, she became very feeble, but her soul was united the more with God. She often remained two or three days without being able to move. In meditating upon the passion of Christ, her love for Him increased so much, that she often said that she preferred her compassion for Christ to any vision or contemplation; and when she was asked why, she answered, that by visions and contemplation, one could easily fall into spiritual pride; while in meditating upon the passion of Christ, we would remain humble and faithful. When dying, she had the passion of Christ read to her, and at the words: "He gave up the ghost"—she died peaceably in the Lord, in the year 1420. When asked to pray to God, that He would make known the grace He had bestowed upon her, she replied: "I shall most earnestly pray that it may not be revealed upon earth; for,"

she added, "you have the life of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, the twelve Apostles, and the Saints; but I am a sinful creature." Thus it seems that God granted her petition, as no sign or miracle was performed after her death.

ST. FINTAN.

(November 15.)

"The Vow."

It happened in the ninth century, that Fintan, a noble youth of Ireland, was captured by pirates, and while on board of the ship, another Danish vessel met and gave them battle. Fintan fought valiantly for his master, who had bought him as a slave. The pagan was so much rejoiced at this noble deed of the Christian slave, that he had his chain taken off, but would not give him his liberty. When the ship landed near an island, to get fresh water, Fintan was allowed to land; he escaped and hid in a cave, under a rock near the shore. After a while the tide rose, and the waters reached the cave; but Fintan, confiding in God, remained one day and one night in the cave, until the pirates left and the waters receded.

The island was perfectly barren, and Fintan found nothing but wild herbs, which he ate to escape starvation. While wandering about, he saw dolphins and whales sporting about in the sea; by which the youth was taught to place confidence in Almighty God, since He who gives life and joy to animals, would not forget man. Fintan now prayed for assistance and help, and at the same time promised that he would renounce all earthly pleasures, even his native country, and that he would make a pilgrimage to Rome and serve God.

A vow is a promise made to God, which is pleasing to Him, and which we are bound to fulfill. If, therefore, you have made a promise to dress a poor child every year, for first communion, or to go to church every Friday, you have thereby made a vow, because you have made a promise to God, which otherwise you are not obliged to fulfill. By making a vow, we please God, and are kept from being fickle; God, in consequence, often gives us graces, which we otherwise could not obtain; as for instance, health, deliverance from danger, assistance in want.

Fintan having said a prayer and made the vow, felt greatly consoled and encouraged, so that he threw himself, with his clothes on, into the sea, and carried by the waves, he arrived safely on the coast of Scotland. He wandered about for some days, and did not find any one who could speak his language, until he was at length brought to the Bishop, who had studied in Ireland. The Bishop was much pleased with the youth, kept him for two years in his house,

and wished to ordain him priest; Fintan, however, refused, in order to fulfill his vow, to go to Rome. He therefore went to France, passed through Tours, to pray at the tomb of St. Martin, and finally reached Rome, after many sufferings. Thence he went to Switzerland, and proceeded further up the Rhine, where Count Wolfenus received the pious stranger, and kept him for two years in his palace. Here Fintan, by the practice of virtue, was a living sermon to all. By the persuasion of the Count, Fintan entered the abbey of Rhine-au (meadow), where, owing to his exemplary life, order and discipline were restored.

After some time, however, St. Fintan left, as he was not satisfied with the life he led; and he therefore asked permission of his Superior to live all alone in a hermitage, which was built for him near the church, and where he lived for twenty-two years. He gave consolation, instruction, advice and admonition, to all the sinners and afflicted who came to see him; he wept with those who mourned, and he rejoiced with those who rejoiced; but with himself he was very austere; during the twenty-two years he lived as a hermit, he never slept in a bed, never warmed himself near a fire, never ate bread, but received the Holy Communion daily. He was often assailed by temptations, but by prayer he overcame them all, so that he lived in the greatest happiness and quiet until his death.

St. Fintan, when entering the abbey of Rhine-au, made certain vows, but after a few years he made a vow to live in seclusion. If we have made a vow, we can change it for another vow, in which we promise to aspire after greater perfection. If you, for instance, have made a vow to recite the rosary every Sunday afternoon, in the church, you can change it by promising to hear Mass every day, because the last promise, or vow, is of greater value than the former. No Christian, however, is allowed to dispense himself from a vow which he has made; the Church alone has this power, which she exercises, whenever the honor of God and the good of the Church demands it.

BLESSED ALBERTUS MAGNUS.

(November 16.)

"Pious Sayings."

Six hundred years ago, there lived a young nobleman, who was studying at Padua; he had been for some time at the university, without having any special purpose in view. Once, while kneeling before a statue of the Mother of God, in the church of the Dominicans, he prayed for light, and it appeared to him as if the Mother of God had counseled him to join the Dominicans, and to strive

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after knowledge. He therefore applied for reception in the convent, which was granted to him most cheerfully.

Albertus evinced such talent, that he was sent to Cologne, to become a teacher in a higher school; and wherever the Dominicans founded a house of their order, Albertus was sent, to confirm and further the good work. He became so celebrated for his learning, that St. Thomas Aquinus, one of the most learned Doctors of the Church, became his scholar. As St. Thomas was very silent, his school-fellows called him the dumb ox. Albertus, however, knew him better, and said: "You call him a dumb ox; truly, he will make such a noise in the world, that every one shall be astonished at his wisdom." When Albertus went to Paris, Thomas followed him.

Albertus wrote 800 works—contained in twenty folio volumes;—he recited daily the 150 psalms, although continually occupied with preaching and hearing confessions. He was afterwards chosen Provincial of the whole Order in Germany, Hungary and the Netherlands. He made all his visitations on foot, and he wrote a book for each convent which he visited, so that he might in some sort repay his brethren for the little he received from them.

Although Christianity had been introduced into Poland, it was not as yet firmly established, as many pagan customs still prevailed there; thus, for instance, there was a law that aged people who were unable to work, and children born cripples, or where they exceeded a certain number, should be put to death. The Poles were meanwhile engaged in a war with the pagans, so that Christianity was almost entirely extinguished among them. In vain had the Pope sent priests to Poland to restore Christian order; they could effect nothing, until he commissioned Albertus to go thither, who was very successful in this mission.

The Bishop of Ratisbon had been deposed by the Pope, and as the affairs of his diocese were in the greatest disorder, the Holy Father appointed Albertus Bishop. He soon established order and discipline; but as the Bishop of Ratisbon was at the same time a Prince of the German empire, and consequently obliged to give his attention to worldly affairs, which necessity was insufferable to the holy friar, he obtained permission from the Pope to resign his Episcopal office.

Albertus lived at the time of the crusades, and although he was seventy years of age, he went from city to city, to invite the people to join them. On his visits, he made use of many sentences, which are still preserved in convents and families. We will cite a few of them:

"To give one egg for God's sake while you are alive, will be more profitable than to bequeath a church full of gold after your death. If we forgive those who have injured us in body, goods or honor, it will be of greater advantage to us, than if we would cross the sea and live in the holy sepulchre. By accepting humbly good and evil from God, acknowledging both as gifts of God, we

gain more than if we would scourge ourselves daily. If I wished to know learned priests, I would go to Paris; but if I wish to be instructed concerning the mysteries of God, I would go to a poor man who possessed the faith. As often as we refrain from an idle word or a vain look for God's sake, we receive our Saviour spiritually, as the priest receives him really at the altar. A sick man often thinks that his life is useless before God; but if he cannot perform good works, his sickness and patience touches the heart of God more than the zeal of a thousand healthy persons. The servant of God should persevere before the face of the Lord; he should not become discouraged or angry, murmur or lament on account of a small temptation, suspicion, tribulation, calumny, or any other affliction. O, if we would only once extend the hand of our good will to God, we would chase away these flies. The end of Christian perfection is love, by which we are attached to God; this attachment to God is necessary for the salvation of all; it is shown in the observance of the commandments of God and by our conformity to the divine will, in this manner excluding all mortal sins, which are opposed to love."

Three years before his death, Albertus lost the riches of his immense learning; his memory left him entirely—only the truths of our holy religion remained fresh before his mind. He recognized in this a warning that he should converse no more with the world, but with God alone. Once Archbishop Sigisfrid, of Cologne, called to see him, and, knocking at the door of his cell, he asked: "Albertus, are you there?" Albertus did not open the door, but said: "Albertus is no longer here." The Archbishop understood the words of Albertus, and went home sighing. After having received the holy Sacraments with great devotion, he gave up his spirit in the presence of his weeping and praying brethren.

ST. HUGH.

(November 17.)

"Kindness to Animals."

St. Hugh was the son of a knight in Burgundy, and when eight years old, was sent to a convent to receive his education. After the death of his mother, the father of St. Hugh also entered the convent, and when old and feeble, Hugh nursed him, for which he received his father's blessing.

The Saint had already made great progress in virtue, when the Prior of the convent took him on a visit to a Carthusian abbey. The severe rules of this

order possessed great attractions for Hugh, and he joined the brethren; but he was very soon after attacked by the most violent temptations against chastity, which, however, he conquered, assisted by the grace of God.

After some time, the king of England expressed a wish to have Hugh appointed Prior of the Carthusian priory of Witham, which the king himself had built; the king's wish was fulfilled. He soon discovered the talent and sanctity of the new Prior, and he had such confidence in him that he always asked his advice in his most important affairs.

The king being once at sea with a large fleet, a terrible storm arose, so that all despaired of being saved, when the king prayed thus: "O Lord, the Prior of Witham is serving Thee in truth; through his prayers and merits have mercy on us in this affliction, which we have deserved on account of our sins;" when at once the storm abated, and the ships arrived safely.

Under Pope Urban III., in the year 1126, Hugh was consecrated Bishop of Lincoln, which diocese had been vacant for eighteen years. The holy Bishop had a special love for children; wherever he met them, he accosted them kindly, made the sign of the cross on their forehead, and blessed them; even the most timid children, and those who were too young to speak, were so wonderfully attracted by him that they loved him more than they did their own parents. Not only did innocent children, but irrational animals also know that Hugh was a man according to the heart of God. On the day of his arrival at the Episcopal palace, a strange and unusually large swan made his appearance, approached the Bishop with confidence, ate from his hand, put his head into the wide sleeves of his habit, and was unwilling to leave him day or night. When Hugh was absent, the swan would fly to a neighboring pond, but when it expected its master to return, it would fly back to the house, and make its presence known by some peculiar noise. Upon one occasion only did the swan fail to meet Hugh, and it then exhibited great sadness, and went off with a drooping neck. The swan seemed to have had a presentment of the approaching death of St. Hugh, for shortly after the holy Bishop died.

We find it recorded in the lives of many of the Saints that animals showed a special affection and fidelity to them; even lions and tigers could not be induced to touch or injure some of the martyrs. This can be explained as follows: Man is destined by God to have a mastery over the brute creation—for animals know nothing of God. Animals were originally obedient to man; but when man rebelled against God, nature and the animals also rebelled against man. If, however, man attains a high degree of perfection, animals sometimes appear to know it, and, laying aside their ferocity, they with confidence and affection approach a pious man, "for the just has mercy on the beast." To be merciful to animals, is a sign of true Christianity, although there are many who love dogs, cats, and birds, and yet are not good Christians; but he who maliciously ill-treats an animal, is not a Christian; for the spirit of God reigns in every true Christian,

and of God it is said in the Old Testament: "Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which thou hast made; for thou didst not appoint or make anything hating it." (Wis. 11 : 25.)

St. Hugh showed a particular pity and kindness towards lepers; he washed and kissed their feet, and gave them food and money. Chancellor William, who wished to see if the holy Bishop was truly humble, said to him one day: "St. Martin cured the leper by kissing him; but no one has yet been cured by your kiss." The Saint made the following beautiful and humble reply: "The kiss of St. Martin healed the body of the leper; the kiss of the leper, on the contrary, heals my soul."

Laymen sometimes lamented because they could not serve God in a monastery; but the Saint told them that at the Last Judgment God would not ask us if we have been monks or hermits, but if we have been good Christians; that is whether we had love in our heart, truth upon our lips, and purity in our bodies.

He would also frequently say that God deserved to be loved by the female sex, because He showed greater honor to women than to men by choosing Mary to be the Mother of God, since no one in the same manner could be called the Father of God.

The holy Bishop attended most strictly to his religious and episcopal duties. Thus it happened that he was twice invited to dine with the king while engaged in burying the dead. The courtiers were impatient, and said that the king and his ministers were waiting for him, and that they could not remain fasting on his account. Hugh, however, answered: "My food is to do the will of God; let the king not wait, but tell him to commence his dinner; for it is better that an earthly king should eat without me than that I should not fulfill the command of the King of heaven."

This happened under King Henry of England, and his son, King Richard; and divine Providence so directed it that he who disregarded the invitation of two kings, was honored by having his body, after death, carried a part of the way and accompanied by two kings, those of England and Scotland.

ST. ROMANUS.

(November 18.)

"Independence of the Soul."

At the time when the persecution against the Christians again broke out under the emperor Diocletian, there lived in the city of Antioch a young man named Romanus. He was a Deacon of the Church, like SS. Stephen and Lawrence, and seeing that Christian churches were destroyed, and that so many Christians, and even some priests sacrificed to the gods, his soul was filled with grief. He reproached them publicly; and regardless of the danger to which he exposed himself, he assembled the Christians who out of fear had forsaken their faith. He even gave himself up to the judge, in order to set a good example to other Christians. The judge then commanded him to be scourged, and used every imaginable torture, for the courage and frankness of the Saint had filled him with anger; but Romanus, notwithstanding, declared with a loud voice that Christ was the true King, and that he would never obey the emperor if commanded by him to commit sin.

The judge then had him put on a rack, and torn with iron hooks, so that the bones could be seen; the Saint, however, could not be disturbed from praising God for his sufferings, and from lamenting over the blindness of his enemies. More furious than before, the judge ordered the executioners to tear his face open instead of his sides; the Saint gratefully replied that this cruelty would only give him more mouths with which to announce the honor of Christ. The judge then threatened to burn him alive; but the Saint did not cease praising God.

A stake was accordingly prepared, and Romanus placed at it, when at once the firmament became darkened, and a heavy rain descended, so that all attempts to set fire to the faggots were frustrated. This event caused great excitement, and as the emperor happened to be present in the city, he commanded that Romanus should be set free, as he would not resist the will of heaven.

Romanus, however, did not long enjoy his liberty; he was again brought to trial, and the judge commanded his tongue to be cut out, on account of the offensive language he had used. The Saint listened to this cruel sentence without evincing the least fear. There was a physician in the city who out of weakness had renounced the Catholic faith, and who was now commanded to cut out the tongue of the martyr. The unhappy man was unwilling to execute the horrible sentence, but he was too timid to disobey the judge. The Saint opened his mouth most cheerfully in order to have the operation performed, and the surgeon kept the tongue as a relic, trusting that it would heal the wound of his soul.

It was a matter of great surprise that Romanus had not died immediately

after the execution of the sentence; but still another miracle is related by an eye-witness. As Romanus was sent back to prison, and the jailor, who knew nothing of what had happened, asked the Saint his name, the martyr exclaimed with a loud voice: "My name is Romanus!" The Saint was for several months kept in prison, where he often spoke of the cross and the victory of Christ. It was especially remarkable that, whereas he had stammered before his tongue was cut out, he could now speak with ease and fluency.

Endeavor, dear reader, like the martyr Romanus, to be faithful to God in life and in death, and through the grace of God the powers of your soul will after death be freer and more glorious than when you were an inhabitant of this earth.

ST. ELIZABETH.

(November 19.)

"Te Deum."

MARBURG is now a Protestant city; but there still exists a beautiful Gothic church, erected when the city was Catholic; and although the holy sacrifice of the Mass is no longer offered up within its walls, the statue of a Saint can yet be seen, standing upon a pedestal, holding in one hand a church, and with the other extended, as if in the act of bestowing alms upon a beggar at her feet. This statue represents St. Elizabeth, in whose honor the church was built. Although she died when only twenty-four years old, her life is nevertheless rich in beautiful incidents.

A pious King of Hungary, named Andreas II., became the father of a daughter, who in baptism received the name of Elizabeth (which means full of God). When only three years old, the love of almsgiving was a prominent feature in the character of the youthful Princess. According to the strange custom of the time (1200), Elizabeth was, when in her fourth year, betrothed to the young Landgrave, Louis of Thuringia, and sent to the castle of Wartburg, at Eisnach, for the purpose of being educated with her future husband. Even before the child could read, she would often visit the chapel of the Castle, open a missal, fold her hands together, and raise her eyes to heaven, and seem absorbed in child-like devotion, a devotion which we poor sinners can comprehend as little as we do the perpetual adoration of the angels. She had found her lost home in the church, and when it was closed, she would kiss the door, the lock, and even its walls. Whatever money she had, she distributed among the poor, and she often asked alms in order to be able to give more; she never took

the name of God in vain, always dressed plainly when going to church, and although a mere child, knew well the value of self-denial. What Elizabeth, assisted by divine inspiration, did of herself, parents should teach their children to do; they—the parents—should teach their children to pray with devotion, and should never allow them to fall asleep until they have said their prayers; they should incite their children to perform works of mercy, by telling them something in regard to the sad condition of the poor; they should give their children alms to distribute, and encourage them to give to others of the little they possess.

The great piety and charity of Elizabeth, however, excited disapprobation and jealousy at court. The mother and sister of her husband ridiculed her, and even tried to persuade Louis to send her back to her father. On one occasion, the Landgravine, acompanied by her own daughter and Elizabeth, paid a visit to the church of St. Elizabeth at Eisnach. They were richly attired in their robes of state, and wore golden coronets. On entering the church, all knelt before a crucifix; when Elizabeth took off her crown, placed it at the foot of the cross, and in adoration fell upon her knees. The Landgravine reproached her bitterly; but Elizabeth, rising from the ground, said: "Dear lady, reprove me not. Here I behold the merciful Jesus, who died for me, wearing a crown of thorns; how then dare I, in His presence, wear a crown of gold and jewels? My crown is a mockery of His." She then prostrated herself again before the crucifix, praying and weeping. Her love of poverty increased so much, that she would often dress herself like a beggar; and when remonstrated with by the ladies of her court for doing so, she would say: "Thus will I appear when I shall be poor and miserable, for God's sake."

Although severe with herself, Elizabeth was very kind to the poor and sick, for which reason she was called the mother of the poor. She visited the humblest dwellings, in order to relieve suffering humanity, and she always showed particular kindness to lepers. In the church of Marburg, there is yet to be seen a picture in which a prince is in the act of snatching the coverlid from a bed, while the figure of a lovely child is thus exposed to view. The picture is intended to remind us of the following incident in the life of St. Elizabeth:

Once when visiting the poor, she found a child covered with leprosy. Moved with compassion, she took the little sufferer in her arms, carried it home, and laid it in her own bed. Her husband was absent at the time, but as soon as he returned, his mother met him, and said: "My son, come and see with whom thy wife shares her bed," and she led him to the chamber, telling him what Elizabeth had done. Filled with anger and disgust, Louis rushed to the bed, snatched away the coverlid, when behold! instead of a loathsome leper, there lay an infant with the features of the beautiful new-born babe of Bethlehem; and while they gazed upon it, transfixed with wonder, the vision smiled sweetly and disappeared.

Prince Louis had resolved to join the crusaders, and Elizabeth hearing of it, swooned at his feet. On recovering her senses, she recommended him to the keeping of God. The parting was very painful to both, and his little children cried out loudly, "Good night, dear Father, good night." Louis died on his way to the Holy Land, and when Elizabeth heard the sad tidings, she was prostrated with grief, and shortly after gave birth to a daughter. A most cruel persecution then commenced against the holy Princess and her children. Her husband's brothers, Henry and Conrad, took possession of their nephew's heritage, and banished the princely widow and her family from the Wartburg. It was winter and very cold when Elizabeth descended the rocky path to Eisenach. She was allowed to take nothing with her but her children, and two faithful servants. Henry had forbidden any of the people to give her assistance, and hence she wandered about, like a poor beggar, until she found shelter at a wayside inn. When Elizabeth saw her children suffering for the common necessaries of life, she placed them with some charitable persons, while she endeavored to gain her livelihood by spinning. At length the crusaders of Eisenach returned, and through their efforts, Elizabeth was restored to her former dignity and estates; but she loved poverty, and had a cell built for her in the city of Marburg, near the Franciscan convent, which she had previously founded, and in which she had the "Te Deum" sung in thanksgiving for the trials which it had pleased Almighty God to send her. She died after a few days' sickness, in the twenty-fourth year of her age. And now, dear reader, form the resolution, in imitation of St. Elizabeth, to praise God when He afflicts you, and you will find yourself greatly consoled whenever you recite the "Te Deum."

ST. EDMUND.

(November 20.)

"The Ways of God."

St. Edmund, although a king, attained great sanctity, for with God all things are possible. The dangers that beset those who are in possession of high rank and wealth, may be overcome by affliction. St. Edmund was king of a portion of England at a time when the whole country was divided among different rulers (870). He was majestic in appearance, and kind and gentle in his manners; never proud, but from his earliest childhood inclined to the practice of virtue.

As a ruler he was prudent and just, as a Christian liberal to the poor, and he was truly a friend to the widow and orphan; but upon the crown of his good works the cross had to be placed. A true father of his people will be sorely

grieved when he sees the whole country and its inhabitants in a state of misery —what the people feel for themselves and their families, he feels for all. Swarms of pirates from Norway and Denmark, under Inguar and Hubba, invaded the dominions of St. Edmund. These pirates were cruel pagans; they burned cities, murdered children before the eyes of their mothers, abused women and virgins, destroyed whatever they found, and put to death as many men as they could, so as to weaken the army of St. Edmund.

Inguar sent a messenger to the king, saying: "Inguar, our invincible master has landed on the shore of this territory, where he intends to winter. He commands you to divide your inheritance with him; should you, however, refuse, you will be dispossessed of your kingdom and riches. The raging storm, even thunder and lightning, cannot injure our ships, because the very elements are friendly to us. Submit, therefore, to this great king, for he will spare the humble, but will humble the proud."

Filled with grief, St. Edmund sought the advice of a Bishop, who counselled him to accede to the demands of Inguar. The king, however, declared that he had no wish to survive his faithful subjects, who had been cruelly put to death by the pirates. "Anointed in baptism, in confirmation, and at my coronation," said he, "I am resolved to bow my neck to no other yoke but to that of my Saviour. I made the vow in the presence of my nobles not to serve any master, but to live and rule under Christ." Turning then to the messenger, he continued: "Stained as you are with the blood of my subjects, you deserve to be punished with death; but for the sake of Christ I will not touch you. Go, therefore, and say to your master: Son of Satan, you can neither terrify me by your threats, nor deceive me by your flatteries; you will find me unarmed; you may take all my treasures, and even my life, but my soul you cannot harm. After having killed my people, think you that I care to rule over plundered and deserted houses? Know, therefore, that King Edmund will never submit to an infidel."

He had hardly spoken these words, and the messenger had just left, when Inguar arrived. He at once surrounded the palace, took Edmund prisoner, and had him chained and scourged most brutally; but the saintly king ceased not to give praise to God. In their rage, the pagan soldiers shot him with arrows, so that he can be justly compared to St. Sebastian.

Finally Inguar ordered him to be beheaded, which command was executed, so that Edmund, adorned with the crown of victory and justice, was received into the communion of Saints as king and martyr on the twentieth day of November. The pagans became very cruel to the Christians, destroyed churches and convents, and put priests and monks to death wherever they found them.

You see, dear reader, how a pagan ruler was permitted to devastate a Christian country, and murder a saintly king, as well as the pious servants of God. The history of the world produces innumerable instances where wicked men

have been successful in all they undertook, whereas right and justice were disregarded. Where then, you will perhaps ask, is the justice and omnipotence of God, if the wicked are allowed to triumph, and the just to be oppressed? Neither this world nor this life is the place or time of retribution, but only of trial and practice, and it is meritorious for Christians, if in spite of injustice and misery they persevere in faith, hope, and charity. If virtue were rewarded in this world, and vice punished, good works would be accomplished and evil avoided only through motives of self-interest, and virtue would consequently lose its beauty and value. God permits all things, in order to strengthen our faith—but the time of retribution is the Last Judgment. Have patience, therefore, dear reader; time passes rapidly, and eternity is at hand. The cruel Inguar and the saintly King Edmund have for a thousand years received what they deserved—the one eternal punishment, the other a martyr's crown.

ST. ISIDORA.

(November 21.)

"Humble Exterior."

THE blossom of the wheat and grape are most insignificant in appearance, although their fruits possess the most precious qualities. From them bread and wine are made, thus becoming flesh and blood of man; and it is bread and wine that is changed upon the altar into the body and blood of Christ. It is, therefore, not without significance that the Creator has given to the most valuable of plants the smallest and most colorless of flowers; it is the emblem of humility, and shows that the most glorious results have had their commencement in humility. There was at Thebes, in Egypt, a convent in which more than three hundred virgins served God. Among them was a nun, named Isidora, or, as she was called by some, Amma. It appears that, contrary to the spirit of their holy rules, many of the sisters treated Isidora with contempt, and would not even eat with her; they looked upon her as a half-witted, awkward creature, upon whom any one might vent their ill-temper. Isidora was never permitted to leave the kitchen, and was obliged to eat what was left by others. She never murmured at the hardships she was compelled to undergo, but bore every species of ignominy with patience. Instead of a veil she wore a piece of old cloth wound around her head. Not far from the convent, there lived a hermit, named Pyoter, who was celebrated for his piety and holiness, but who nevertheless meditated with pleasure upon his own virtues. Almighty God, not wishing that he should lose his soul through pride, appeared to him in a vision, and said: "Why are you

so proud? Go to the convent, and you will find a virgin who wears a piece of cloth on her head instead of a veil; she is better than you are, for although constantly insulted, she has never turned her heart from God, while you even in the solitude of your cell think always of the world." Pyoter at once went to the convent, and asked to see all the sisters, but he did not discover the one whom the vision had commanded him to visit. He, therefore, inquired if there was not another nun in the house, and he received the answer that there was another sister in the kitchen, who was not, however, in her right mind. St. Pyoter then asked to see her, and when she entered the room, he at once recognized her. He threw himself on his knees before her, and asked her blessing, but Isidora, amazed at being treated with any kind of respect, said: "It would be more proper for you to bless me, holy Father."

The nuns were astonished at St. Pyoter's conduct, and said to him: "Blessed Father, do not disgrace yourself thus, for this person is foolish." But Pyoter replied: "It is you all who are foolish; she is a model both to you and to me, and I hope to be found at the Last Judgment as worthy of heaven as she is." In consequence of the admonition of the saintly hermit, the nuns begged Isidora to forgive them for having treated her so harshly; and after bestowing his blessing upon the community, St. Pyoter retired to his cell, enriched with another treasure of heavenly wisdom.

Not accustomed to the praises and honors that were now lavished upon her, Isidora left the convent, and it is not positively known what became of her. If, dear reader, others consider you simple and ignorant, and for that reason mock at and insult you, do not become angry and sad, for if you are despised by the world, but nevertheless continue to lead a pious and virtuous life, Almighty God will love you the more. Imitate the example of St. Isidora, and be patient if you are treated rudely and scornfully. Never scoff at those who are deprived of their senses, at the deaf and dumb, or at cripples, because they may be of more value before God on account of their innocence, humility, and charity, than are those who in appearance only are learned and distinguished. Do not forget the little flower of the wheat and grape-vine; the beautiful and fragrant rose bears but a useless berry for its fruit, whereas the magnificent and gaudy tulip has no fruit at all.

ST. CECILIA.

(November 22.)

"The Goods of the Soul."

THERE are three churches in Rome dedicated to this Saint. One of these stands upon the place where she lived and died. Cecilia is held in such veneration by the Catholic Church, that since her death (230 years after Christ), her name is mentioned in every mass.

Cecilia was the daughter of a noble pagan family in Rome. In her early youth she became a Christian, and led a virtuous life; her parents gave her in marriage to a young and noble Roman, but she prayed to God that her virginity might be preserved. On the day of the wedding, she told her bridegroom, Valerian, that an angel of God was watching her, and that if he would love her with a pure heart, and would respect her virginity, the angel would love him as he did her. Valerian desired to see the angel, but Cecilia told him, that he could only see him if he believed in the one true God; and she therefore sent him to the aged Pope Urban, who to avoid the persecution of the pagans, had sought refuge in the catacombs in the Appian Way. While conversing with the holy Pope, an aged man appeared, dressed in a snow-white garment, holding in his hands a roll, upon which letters of gold were written. It was St. Paul. Valerian, terror-stricken, fell prostrate on the ground, and covered his face; but the vision raised him up, and commanding him to read the words written upon the roll, said that he would then see the Angel of whom Cecilia had spoken. Valerian lifted up his eyes and read: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all." (Ephes. 4: 5.) The vision now said: "Do you believe, or are you yet in doubt?" And Valerian, with a loud voice cried out: "I firmly believe." The vision now disappeared, and Valerian was again alone with the Pope, who after having sufficiently instructed him, baptized him, and sent him back to his spouse. On entering her room, he beheld an angel standing near her, and holding in his hands two crowns of roses and lilies. Giving one of them to Cecilia and the other to Valerian, he said: "Preserve these crowns with a pure heart, for I have gathered them in Paradise; and this shall be a sign to you: the flowers shall be ever fresh and they shall never lose their fragrance; they shall be visible to those only who love chastity as you do. And Valerian, because you have consented to lead a pure life, Christ the Son of God, has sent me to you, to grant to you whatever you ask." Valerian replied; "Nothing is dearer to me upon earth, than the love of my brother Tiburtius. I therefore beg that the Lord may lead him also to salvation." The Angel replied, with a celestial smile: "Because you have asked what is more pleasing for Christ to

give than for you to ask, know that your brother shall be saved, as you have been, through His servant Cecilia, and you shall with him obtain the crown of martyrdom." The Angel then disappeared, and while both were rejoicing in the Lord, Tiburtius, the brother of Valerian, entered and saluted the wife of his brother with a kiss, as was then customary in Rome, and he said: "Whence comes such an odor of roses and lilies, at this time of year?" Valerian replied: "If you should become a Christian, you would receive an immortal wreath, and see Him, whose blood is like the blossom of the rose, and whose body is purer than the fairest lily; for we have crowns, which your eyes cannot see."

Cecilia then explained to him the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, spoke of Christ and what he had done, taught and suffered, and of the Apostles, and then of life everlasting. The young Roman finally burst into tears, threw himself at the feet of Cecilia, and promised, henceforth, to despise the world and to aspire only after eternal life; he then turned to his brother Valerian, asking him to take him, without delay, to Pope Urban, in order to be baptized. The saintly Pope most willingly instructed and baptized young Tiburtius, who, in company with Valerian and Cecilia, lived a holy life. After some time, a persecution against the Christians broke out under Almachius, who was the governor of the city, and a decree was issued forbidding them to bury the bodies of the martyrs. Valerian and Tiburtius, however, not heeding this cruel command, were brought before the governor, and condemned to die. Cecilia had an opportunity of seeing them during the night before their execution, and she encouraged them, with supernatural power, to meet death with firmness. She then buried the bodies of the two martyrs, and divided the estate of her husband, as well as her own, among the poor, before the governor could confiscate it.

The governor then commanded Cecilia to sacrifice to the gods, or he would summon her before the court. Cecilia refused to obey, and when she appeared before the tribunal, she spoke with as much courage as if she had been the judge, and the governor had been the criminal. When asked to deny the name of Christ, the saint replied: "You use the rack in order to force criminals to confess crimes; from Christians, however, you demand the very reverse, for you command us to deny what we are; you would delight in having us utter falsehood, but to die for truth is a glorious victory."

Finally, the governor commanded that she should be put to death by fire in her own bath; but although the fire burned a whole day and night, the holy virgin remained unhurt, like the youths in the furnace, and the governor then commanded the executioner to behead her with the sword in her own house. The executioner trembled so, that after having given her three blows on the neck and breast, he left her bleeding, when the Christians gathered her blood with handkerchiefs and sponges. After three days, however, during which time she instructed and exhorted the assembled Christians, she gave up her precious and sanctified soul into the hands of the living God. The holy Pope

Urban, during the night, buried her glorious body in the place where the Bishops and martyrs are buried; but, according to her own wish, her house was consecrated as a church, and Mass was constantly celebrated there.

We read the following passage in the Revelation of St. John, 3 : 18: "I counsel of thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be made rich; and mayest be clothed in white garments; and anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." Cecilia possessed all these goods of the soul; her eyes were clear, so that she could see the nothingness of the world; and her soul was clothed with white garments. The one was that of her innocence and virginity, the other that of being free from sin and of being holy; she possessed the gold of merits by practicing the works of mercy; and this gold was tried in voluntary martyrdom. We also, dear reader, must possess these three goods, the eye-salve in order to find the way of salvation, white garments and gold in order to be clean and rich before God. Where can we buy them? Christ says: "I counsel thee to buy of me." With what money can we buy these spiritual goods? With prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds; for the more we pray and give in charity, the more we will be enlightened, and the more will we be purified.

ST. CLEMENT.

(November 23.)

"Christian Love."

In the Epistle to the Philippians, Chapter 4, verse 3, St. Paul speaks of Clement as one who had labored with him in the Gospel, and whose name is written in the book of life. He was, therefore, a disciple of the Apostles, and was worthy to be chosen the fourth Pope. During his reign a schism arose in Corinth; good priests were deposed, pious Christians scandalized, the timid became weakened in the faith, and pagans scoffed at religion, until finally the good Christians applied to the Pope Clement of Rome, who then wrote an Epistle to the Corinthians, which Epistle was held in such veneration that it was not only read at Corinth, but also in other churches, as though it had been written by an Apostle. This Epistle was lost for a time, but was found again about two hundred years ago. We give a short extract from it: "Whoever desires to possess Christian love, must keep the commandments of Christ; for who can express the power of the love of God? Who can fitly describe its sublime beauty? The height is extraordinary to which divine love elevates us; love unites us with God, love covers a multitude of sins, love suffers all patiently; love has nothing debasing in it, nor is it proud; love knows no discord, love

does not rebel, love does all things in harmony; through love the elect of God attained perfection; without love nothing is pleasing to God. Out of love to us Christ shed His blood for us; He gave His body for ours, His soul for ours.

"See, therefore, beloved, how great and wonderful love is, and how impossible it is to express its perfection in words. Let us, therefore, pray that we may love without reproof. Generations have passed away—those, however, who died in love, possess now, through the grace of God, the kingdom of heaven."

It is very probable that St. Clement died about the year 100 after Christ, and he is called a martyr. The circumstances of his death are not known; some accounts, however, say that Clement, during the persecution of the Christians, under the Emperor Trajan, was exiled to Pontus, where nearly two thousand Christians were condemned to work in the quarries; he also was obliged to work there, and it was a great consolation to the Christian prisoners to have him with them. Hearing that they had to go very far in order to get water, he told them to pray to God for a spring; and while they prayed, he saw a lamb at some distance lifting up its right foot as if pointing to some place. Whereupon the Saint went to the spot, and commanded them to dig, when suddenly a spring of fresh water was discovered. This miracle caused the pagan inhabitants of the whole country to be instructed by St. Clement, and to become Christians.

When the news reached Rome, the emperor sent messengers to Pontus, in order to suppress Christianity among the inhabitants there, and commanded St. Clement to be chained to an anchor, and to be thrown into the depths of the sea, so that the Christians could not find his relics: but the Christians prayed to God that they might discover them. The sea receded, so that the Christians could reach the body, which they found lying in a kind of marble chapel, and near by was the anchor. It is also said that the sea receded on the anniversary of the Saint's death, and remained so for seven days, so that the Christians could pay their respect to the Saint. Many miracles happened there at the same time.

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS.

(November 24.)

"The Spiritual Vine."

THE widow of a poor weaver had a son whom she apprenticed to a carpenter; but he proved very unskillful. She therefore bound him to a tailor; for this occupation also he seemed unfitted. He then tried to become a painter or

carver, but he succeeded in nothing, and to all appearances was a very useless being, until a nobleman, attracted by his pious life, sent him to college.

The vine grows well when planted in rich soil, and will bear very large grapes; but when planted in poor and stony ground, the grapes are sweeter and more luscious, and the vine has more strength. Almighty God planted St. John also upon barren ground. Having become acquainted with St. Teresa, he was persuaded by her to enter a Carmelite convent of the strictest rule. Together with another religious, John took up his abode in a small farmer's hut; they built two cells in a corner in which they barely could lie down or stand up; their heads almost touched the roof; a stone was their pillow, their covering in winter was some hay, and the snow would often drift in through the apertures, which fact, however, they never seemed to notice, so absorbed were they in devotion. From this convent they proceeded to instruct the neglected people of the neighborhood in Christian truth; they walked barefooted through the snow and the cold, and returned home fasting at a late hour.

The vine is not planted near the highways, because it would be too much exposed to the dust, and its growth would be thus endangered. On a quiet hillside, however, it thrives beautifully, and the grapes ripen. In the same manner St. John loved seclusion; he never left his convent unless compelled to do so, and would never accept any invitation to dine, but returned at once to his beloved cell. A monk once found him alone between the rocks, and asking him if he always desired to live so, John answered: "Living among the rocks, I have less to confess than if I would live among men."

In the Spring the vine is trimmed in order that too many branches may not encumber it, thus unnecessarily destroying the sap; and afterwards some of the leaves are cut off, so that the sun may reach the grapes. John deprived himself of all worldly goods, and it was justly said of him: "This man is so poor that nothing can be taken from him, and he is so virtuous that nothing can be given to him." His furniture consisted of a cross made of reeds, a paper-picture, and a bed with one cover; his habit was coarse, and much worn. A very learned man, who had been received into the order, once complained of the poverty of the convent-library, when John, who was Superior, took away all his books, leaving him only a small catechism for children, and said: "In order to learn wisdom and to be saved, learning is not necessary, but we must become like an ignorant and innocent child."

The warmer the sun shines, the sooner will the grapes ripen, and the better will be the vine. St. John of the Cross knew very well that sufferings are like the burning sun, in which the soul will grow to perfection, and will become sweet and precious before God. For this reason he sometimes asked three things of God: not to be a day without sufferings, not to remain Superior, and to die in disgrace and contempt. The only reward that he asked in this life was to suffer, and to be despised for Christ's sake, and his prayer was heard; for he

lost his office as Superior, fell sick, was very badly treated by the other religious, and was even forsaken by his friends.

Finally the fruit had become ripe, and death pressed the precious wine of his sanctified soul. He asked forgiveness of all the brethren for not having set them a better example, and died cheerfully and happily on a Friday, predicting that he would say his prayers the next morning in heaven.

ST. CATHARINE.

(November 25.)

"Christian Fortitude."

We once saw an old and beautiful painting, representing the Mother of God, holding the infant Jesus on her lap, and a virgin kneeling before them, upon whose finger the Divine Child was in the act of placing a ring, while the Mother of God, with a look of gracious majesty, smiled upon them both. The virgin represents St. Catharine, of whom Bishop Esquilinus relates: "In the city of Alexandria, formerly the seat of learning, there lived a virgin named Catharine, who was endowed with all the qualities which one would wish to possess. She was of noble birth, extraordinarily beautiful, and very learned. Of one thing, however, she was ignorant, and that was, the doctrine of Christianity. She once in a dream saw a Queen of great beauty with a child upon her arm. The mother pointed to Catharine, and said to the child: "How do you like this virgin; would you not wish her to become your bride?" The child, however, turned away his face, and said: "She is not beautiful, for she is not yet baptized." Catharine awoke; the dream had made such deep impression upon her, that a most ardent desire to possess the lovely child filled her heart. She, in consequence, became instructed in the Christian faith, and was baptized. Afterwards the Queen of heaven appeared again to her with the divine child; but in a different manner, for the child leaned smilingly towards Catharine, and placed a precious ring upon her finger. She is frequently represented in this manner, but sometimes with a sword and a broken wheel at her side, because on account of her Christian confession, she was tortured with these instruments; for she lived in a time when the Christian religion was persecuted.

When the emperor Maximin lived in Alexandria, he commanded that every one should sacrifice to the gods. Many of the inhabitants were Christians, and as this decree was most dangerous for them, Catharine, together with her servants, went to the emperor in order to convince him of his injustice, telling him that he worshiped lifeless images and seduced whole nations; that he should turn to God, who had created and placed him upon the throne, who had died

for him on the cross, and who would reward each one according to his merits. She spoke with such eloquence concerning the infallible truth, and the necessity of the Christian faith, that the emperor could not sufficiently admire her beauty, her talent and her spirit; and knowing that he was not able to refute her arguments, he assembled the most learned men, to confer with her upon religious matters. The most venerable of these, said to her, with a scornful expression of face, that the most renowned poets spoke with great respect and reverence of the gods, but that they never mentioned anything of the Crucified. Catharine replied, that the poets certainly spoke very highly of the gods, but at the same time they attributed to them the greatest vices, iniquities and absurdities. She then proved how mention was made in the prophecies of Sybil, of the divinity and humanity of Christ, of His birth, and death by a faithless people; and expounded to the astonished sages the fundamental truths of Christianity. None of the Doctors could refute the holy virgin, and the emperor in his anger, commanded them to be burned alive. Before the execution, they asked Catharine to intercede for them before God, that they might obtain pardon of their sins, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Filled with heavenly joy, the holy virgin said: "Blessed are you, because you have left the darkness and followed the light. The death which you will have to suffer shall be a baptism for you, and the ladder to heaven, and shall purify you from all your sins." And comforted by Christian hope, they suffered martyrdom.

The emperor, by persuasion and promises, tried to induce this most extraordinary virgin to sacrifice to the gods; but Catharine said that she would prefer martyrdom to the Imperial purple; whereupon the emperor commanded her to be scourged. Many shed tears; but Catharine remained as unmoved as a statue. The empress then desired to become personally acquainted with Catharine, and accompanied by soldiers, went into the prison to see her. Her conversation with St. Catharine ended in her own conversion and in that of all the soldiers who were with her, and also of the jailor.

St. Catharine was again brought before the judge, and a peculiar splendor seemed to encompass her, so that the emperor, in astonishment, said: "Daughter, you are worthy of the Imperial throne; sacrifice to the gods, and you shall share my power with me." St. Catharine answered: "This beauty is but dust and ashes; time and disease will destroy it." While she spoke thus, one of the officers, not being able to restrain his anger, advised the emperor to have a machine made, having four wheels, on which were fastened sharp knives. This was done, and they threatened to throw Catharine under the wheels and to tear her to pieces, if she would not sacrifice; but as she refused to do so, she was tied upon the wheels, when suddenly, as they were about to be turned, the whole machine broke into pieces, as if struck by lightning. Catharine, however, remained unhurt, so that the spectators cried out with a loud voice: "Great is the God of the Christians."

Maximin, in his rage, intended to inflict even greater punishment upon the holy virgin, when the empress admonished him to free the servant of the great God; but for interceding in behalf of St. Catharine, the empress was at once beheaded. St. Catharine followed her immediately in the same manner, and the report says, that after being beheaded, instead of blood, milk gushed forth, and that angels carried her body upon Mount Sinai, where even now her relics are kept in the Greek church, called after the Saint's name, St. Catharine.

ST. CONRAD.

(November 26.)

"The Blessed Sacrament."

THE diocese of Constance was formerly the largest in Germany; it extended over a large part of Baden, Wirtemberg and Switzerland, and possessed 17,000 priests and ecclesiastics; but in the year 1821 it was divided into different dioceses. Before its division, a noble youth, named Conrad, or Cuno, was sent to the episcopal seminary of Constance. He despised the world and its goods, and devoted himself entirely to the service of God. After the death of Noting, Bishop of Constance, St. Ulric, Bishop of Augsburgh, proposed Conrad as successor to the deceased Bishop; and although he considered himself unworthy to fill such a high office, St. Conrad, owing to the persuasions of St. Ulric, accepted and was consecrated. He had a special devotion towards the passion of Christ, and to the Most Blessed Sacrament.

While saying Mass on Easter in the Cathedral of Constance, a poisonous spider fell into the chalice after the consecration. Although knowing well the consequences, the Saint drank the contents of the chalice, together with the spider. After returning to his episcopal residence, he sat at the table, holding his head in his hands. When the terrified servants asked him what had happened, he smilingly told them to be of good cheer, as he expected a special guest; and at once the spider came alive out of his mouth. In delivering St. Conrad from death in such a wonderful manner, Almighty God showed that he was pleased with him on account of his having obtained the victory over himself. There is nothing on earth that we should respect more than the Blessed Sacrament. For this reason, the Catholic Church administers the Holy Communion under one form only, so that the sacred blood should not be spilled, nor treated with disrespect by keeping it too long, or by the nausea which some people experience by drinking out of the same cup with others. The Catholic Church has also commanded that a light shall be kept burning wherever the Blessed Sacrament is, so that every Catolic may know who is present, and whom

they have to worship. In visiting a church, you should first salute and adore the Saviour in the tabernacle; from the elevation to the communion, Christ is upon the altar, for which reason it is becoming for every Christian to remain praying upon his knees. Every good Catholic should also uncover his head when passing by a Church where Christ dwells in the tabernacle.

It once happened, when St. Conrad was on a visit to St. Ulric, that they remained in pious conversation until after midnight, when a messenger arrived from the Duke of Bavaria, to St. Ulric. It was Friday, but St. Ulric not remembering it, gave the messenger some meat which was left from the supper of Thursday. The messenger, being a wicked man, and opposed to the two holy Bishops, determined to expose them as hypocrites, who ate meat on Friday. Having arrived at the palace of the Duke, he wished to prove his accusation against them, and took from his pocket the piece of meat, but behold! it had been changed into fish. In such a manner, Almighty God Himself had protected the honor and good name of His two faithful servants. In consequence of this event, St. Ulric is represented holding a fish in his hands, while St. Conrad, on account of what happened during the mass, is represented holding a spider.

St. Conrad possessed the spirit of prophecy. One day, upon returning home, he found a young man sitting upon his episcopal throne, where he had placed himself in sport. Confounded and terrified, the youth hastened to leave the throne, when the Saint said to him: "You will not succeed me immediately after my death; but the time will come, when Almighty God shall find you worthy of it." And thus it happened, that after Conrad's death, Gamenold was elected Bishop, and he was succeeded, fifteen years later, by St. Gerhard, the youth who, out of childish play, had seated himself in the episcopal chair.

After a long and successful administration of the diocese, St. Conrad died. His wish was, not to be buried in the Church, but in the open air, near the Cathedral. In consequence, however, of the many miracles performed on his grave, he was afterwards canonized, his body taken up, and solemnly deposited in the Cathedral, behind the Altar of the Holy Cross.

BLESSED FRANCES OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

(November 27.)

"Combat and Victory."

MANY girls, when very young, resolve to enter a convent, but as soon as they form the acquaintance of young men, they abandon the idea. This was the case with Frances, who, although neither handsome nor agreeable, received the attentions of one of her cousins. Their courtship lasted for three years, and Frances became daily more and more indifferent to religion, when suddenly she had a vision; hell appeared open beneath her feet, and she saw the torments of the damned. Filled with terror, she expelled from her mind all wicked thoughts and desires, gave up the society of her cousin, dressed very plainly, and determined to enter a convent.

At that time St. Teresa had founded a Carmelite-convent in the city of Soria, where Frances was received. Although she had made a general confession, the devil still tempted her with impure desires, even until the end of her life; and as she reached the age of sixty years, her soul was constantly in danger, like a person clothed in white garments, who is obliged to pass through a muddy road without soiling them.

Frances was by nature very insolent, and disposed to give way to anger; for which reason she was often punished by her superiors, and at the same time she had to combat against a deep feeling of melancholy and despair. She was also hated and despised by the other sisters, and accused by them as being one who liked to quarrel and to make trouble; and in consequence she was not permitted for some months to receive holy communion.

Without a murmur Frances said: "All these punishments come from heaven; I am the soil upon which they fall." In order to mortify herself, she put aloes in her food, and for some days she ate nothing. Her bed consisted of a few boards, and she never slept more than two or three hours. By her great penances and continual combat, Blessed Frances succeeded in never consenting to an impure thought, thus keeping her soul unstained, although surrounded by so many temptations. Not less faithful and persevering was she in the combat against her temper; whenever she had been angry, she locked herself up in her cell, shed many tears, made firm resolutions, and implored the assistance of God and all the Saints. She slept less, in order to have the more time to pray; at midnight she said three Our Fathers, and three Hail Marys, in honor of the birth of Christ, which devotion she continued until her death, which happened at midnight.

In such a manner Blessed Frances obtained sanctity, excelling all the other sisters, who had fewer temptations to combat. Many persons, when admonished

to lead a more Christian life, and to lay aside all sinful habits, excuse themselves on account of their temperament; and many of those who try to become better, are often discouraged, and even despair, if, contrary to their resolution, they have fallen into their former sins. You see, dear reader, in the life of Blessed Frances, how you can become a Saint, notwithstanding an untoward disposition, and the many temptations which torment you during your life. Resist firmly all sinful thoughts, and do the reverse of what you are tempted to do. Temptations are not sinful if they are not willful. The will of man is weak, but the grace of God strengthens him.

As the life of this blessed servant of the Lord was a long and hard combat, her death was peaceable and lovely. A few days before her death she was for the first time since she had entered the convent free from all impure temptations. Our Lord appeared to her, as did also His Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, and other Saints, for whom she had a special veneration. At midnight her blessed soul left her body, as if she had fallen asleep. We beseech thee, Blessed Frances, to obtain for us also strength and perseverance to combat against all temptations, until our happy death, as thou hast done.

ST. ODA.

(November 28.)

"Perseverance."

St. Oda, the daughter of a King of Scotland, was very beautiful and virtuous. Her father desired to give her in marriage, but she became blind, and thus the design of the father was frustrated; and as the world and its pleasures were in a measure lost to her, she fixed her thoughts on heaven, and sought consolation and joy in God.

Her father having heard of the wonderful cures performed at the tomb of St. Lambert of Liege, sent his daughter there to seek the recovery of her eyesight, through the intercession of that great martyr and Saint. Oda was at once cured, and thanked God most humbly for what he had effected in her behalf. The greatest joy prevailed at the court when Oda returned home. In consequence of this wonderful change, however, she was exposed to numerous temptations. While afflicted with blindness, she spent her time in praying and visiting the churches; she watched and fasted, and endeavored to please her Saviour, and she made the vow of perpetual chastity. But now the world and its pleasures, as a Royal Princess could enjoy them, rose before her; her father at the same time announced his determination that she should marry.

Persons are tried in various ways. Almighty God sometimes afflicts them

with one evil, that they may the easier overcome a greater, and commence to lead a pious life. Some are attacked by sickness, some are imprisoned, others become poor, or else war and pestilence devastate the country, thus reminding the people of death, judgment and hell. As long as such a state of things exists, people will abstain from sin and become better; they will receive the holy sacraments, pray more, and make good resolutions. After a while, however, when Almighty God has removed these afflictions, the majority return to their former sinful life; and we are almost inclined to believe, that if old people could become young again, and the dead return to life, they would most probably resume their former wicked mode of living.

St. Oda remained firm in her resolution never to marry, and was faithful to God; she therefore determined to leave her country and go to the Netherlands, where she visited the principal churches and graves of the Saints, and after having served the Lord for some time in that manner, she died, in great poverty as regards the riches of this world, but enriched with merits and good works. Her body was enshrined by Bishop Osbert in the city of Liege.

BLESSED FATHER SALVATOR.

(November 29.)

"Purgatory."

On the 29th of November, in the year 1711, there died at Palermo, a Capuchin, who is not yet canonized, but who can, on account of his sanctity, be justly proposed to us as an example and model of virtue. His name was Father Salvator, of Pontelloria.

This blessed Religious was so austere in his mortifications and penances, that his Superiors had to moderate his zeal. At the same time he was afflicted from without with many evils, which he bore with patience and resignation. He received strength and grace, owing to his frequent prayers and his continued meditations, and it could be truly said of him: "Our conversation is in heaven." (Phil. 3: 10.) Father Salvator was appointed by his Superiors to preach, and his sermons were so eloquent, that the largest churches were too small to contain all the people. He often heard confessions from early in the morning until late at night, without taking the least refreshment. All the praises, honors and respect lavished upon him, could not induce him to believe that he was not a poor, wretched sinner. Once, another Capuchin accused him of being a hypocrite; Salvator did not defend himself, but thanked him for his reproaches, and chose him for his confessor.

The more charity and humility a man possesses, the more patience he has. Father Salvator was afflicted for twenty-two years with a violent headache, and he was often obliged to remain in his cell, which he had to darken, as the light was insupportable; his stomach was so weak, that the hours of repast were hours of martyrdom to him. He suffered so from rheumatism, that his hands were much distorted, and it was necessary for a lay-brother to feed him like a child; and finally, he was attacked by the dropsy, so that he had to lie upon his back; but as he had the greatest veneration for Christ crucified, his own sufferings were but as flowers that refreshed him with their sweet odor.

Many wonderful cures and prophecies are related in the biography of this blessed Capuchin. More than once he calmed a storm by making the sign of the cross, or by sprinkling holy water around. Sometimes persons who were dangerously ill, invoked him, even while he was still living, and they were restored to health; and in a certain city, where he had preached for a whole year, he was universally regarded as a Saint. Before his death, he had the Passion read to him, and at the words: "Bowing His head, He gave up the ghost"—Father Salvator also yielded up his spirit. His soul, however, did not enter heaven at once, according to a vision of an excellent sister; it was detained in purgatory on account of his having shown, on one occasion, a little impatience and want of resignation to the will of God.

If this good man was sent to purgatory, what will become of us? "For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke 23: 31.)

ST. ANDREW, THE APOSTLE.

(November 30.)

"Degrees of Christian Life."

St. Andrew was the brother of St. Peter, and after the descent of the Holy Ghost he preached the Gospel to the Scythians, and afterwards went to Greece. A very ancient account speaks of him as follows: "When the Governor Aegeas arrived at Patras, he assembled the Christians in order to compel them to sacrifice to the gods. St. Andrew, however, opposed him, saying: 'It is your duty, as the judge of men, to know your judge, who is in heaven, and to worship Him as the one true God.' 'Are you that Andrew,' asked Aegeas, 'who destroys the temples of the gods, and induces people to join that superstitious sect which the emperor has again resolved to exterminate?' 'The Roman emperors,' said St. Andrew, 'know not that the Son of God came for the salvation of man, and taught us that the gods were only evil spirits, and the enemies of man.' Aegeas

replied: 'For preaching such doctrine, your Christ was crucified by the Jews.' 'If you only understood the mystery of the cross,' said St. Andrew, 'you would know how the Creator of mankind, out of love, and voluntarily, took the cross upon His shoulders for our salvation.' 'How can you say that He died voluntarily, since it is known that He was betrayed by one of His disciples, seized by the Jews, and then crucified?' answered Aegeas. 'I acknowledge it,' said St. Andrew, because I was with Him when He was betrayed by His disciple, and He predicted that He would be betrayed and crucified; but He also foretold that He would rise again on the third day.' 'I am astonished,' replied Aegeas, 'how you, an intelligent man, can adhere to the cause of one who was crucified.' 'Remember what I told you,' said Andrew, 'that great was the mystery of the cross.' The holy Apostle then explained to the governor the mystery of redemption, when Aegeas, filled with anger, cast him into prison. There a large crowd assembled to put Aegeas to death, and to free Andrew. The Saint, however, admonished them to be quiet, and not to prevent his suffering martyrdom. On the day following, Aegeas had the Saint brought again before him, trying to induce him to sacrifice to the gods, telling him that if he should refuse he would be put to death. Andrew said: 'Son of death, listen to me, the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, for you will not frighten me with your threats. I shall be the more pleasing to my King, the more I suffer for His name.'

"Aegeas now commanded him to be scourged; after which he again endeavored to induce him to sacrifice; but the Saint refused, and Aegeas sentenced him to be crucified. When St. Andrew was carried to the place of execution, the people who had assembled cried out aloud: 'What has the just, the friend of God done, that he is led to the cross?' Andrew, however, begged them not to interfere with the carrying out of his sentence. Having arrived at the place of execution, St. Andrew, seeing from afar the cross erected, said with a loud voice: 'Hail, holy cross, sanctified by the body of Christ; before the Lord was elevated upon the cross you were a terror, but now you are the object of supernatural love; for the faithful know how many joys you possess, and how many fruits you bring forth. I approach thee with confidence and pleasure; receive me, the disciple of Him who hung upon thee. O dearest cross, that I have sought incessantly, and at length found, take me away from the world, and carry me to my Master, that through thee He may receive me, who was saved through thee.' After having said these words, he gave his garments to the executioner, who tied him to the cross. Stratocles, the brother of Aegeas, was also present, and, together with the crowd, cried out that the Saint had been unjustly condemned. St. Andrew, however, comforted the Christians, telling them that the sufferings of this world were as nothing compared with the glory of heaven.

"The people then went to the house of Aegeas, demanding the liberty of the Saint, whom they declared to be innocent; and Aegeas, from fear, yielded to

to their request; but St. Andrew, seeing that they would take him down from the cross, prayed with a loud voice, saying: 'Lord Jesus Christ, do not permit me to be taken down from this cross, but take me to Thyself, O divine Master, whom I love, whom I know and confess, whom I long to see, and by whom I became what I am. Receive my spirit in peace, and permit not that I shall be taken down from this cross.' After having said this, an extraordinarily brilliant light descended upon him, so that no one could gaze upon him. After having rested upon him for half an hour, the light disappeared, and the Saint gave up his spirit, ascending together with the light to the Lord, to whom be glory and honor forever. Amen."

St. Bernard, in one of his panegyrics upon St. Andrew, says: "There are three degrees of Christian life: the beginning, progress, and perfection. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, the progress is the hope in the Lord, and the perfection is the love of God. Whoever commences with the fear, will patiently carry the cross of Christ; whoever progresses in hope, carries it willingly; but he who is perfected in love, will embrace it with his whole heart. Happy the soul that has attained this degree of love; let us not be discouraged, but call upon the assistance of Him who has arrived at the highest degree of perfection; let us ascend by meditation and prayer; for by meditation we will know the dangers that threaten us, and by prayer we will escape them, with the assistance of our Lord Jesus Christ."

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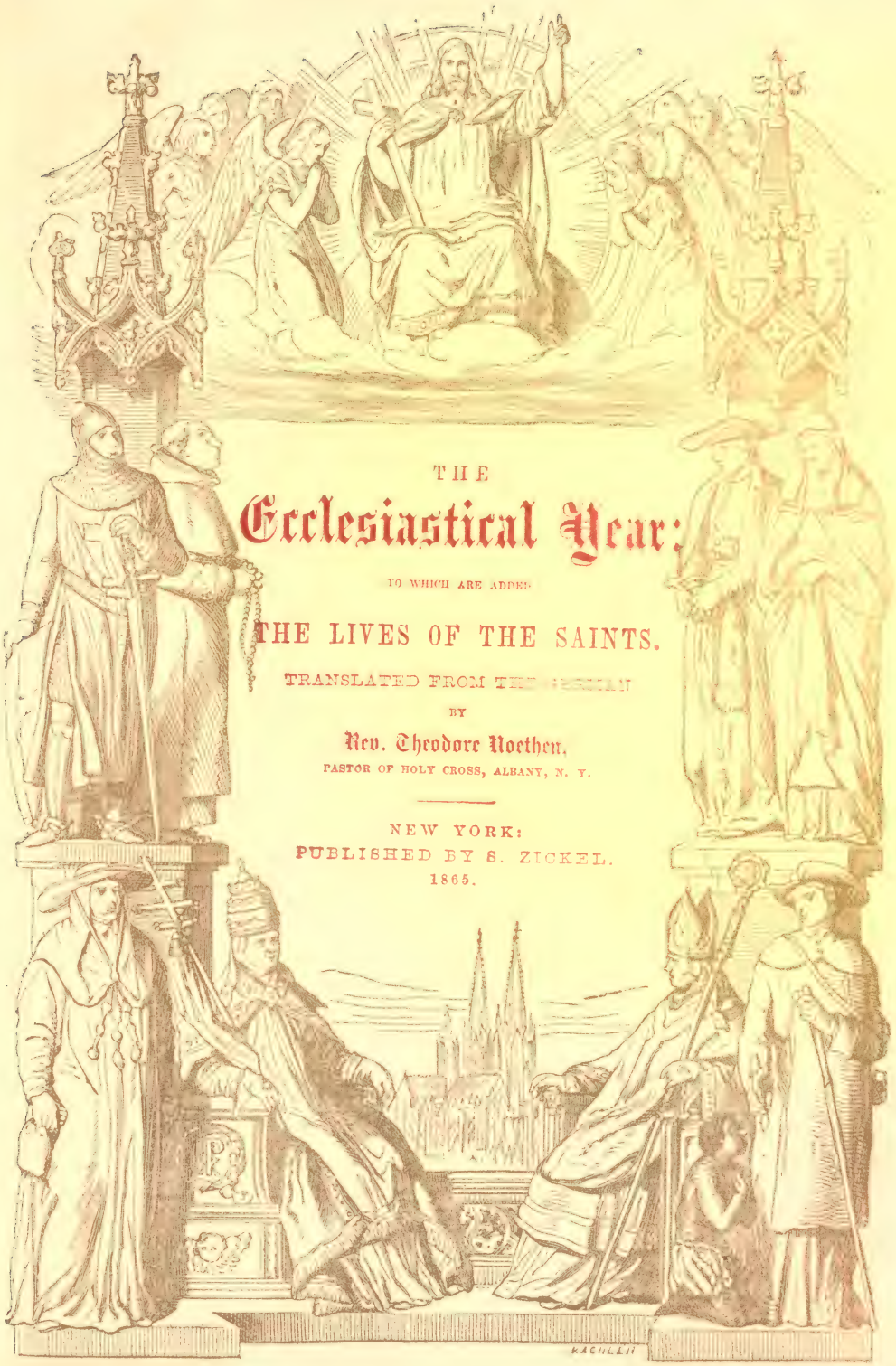
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THE

Ecclesiastical Year:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

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GENERAL

ALPHABETICAL INDEX

OF THE

FIRST AND SECOND VOLUMES

OF

THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR.

CONTAINING:

I.—AN ALPHABETICAL INDEX OF THE NAMES OF THE SAINTS WHOSE LIVES HAVE BEEN RECORDED EITHER IN VOLUME I. OR IN VOLUME II. OF THIS WORK.

II.—AN ALPHABETICAL INDEX OF THE MOTTOES IN VOLUME I. AND VOLUME II

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OF THE

MOTTOES

IN

VOLUME I. AND VOLUME II.,

SHOWING THE VIRTUE MOST PECULIAR TO THE SAINTS, OR THE VICES WHICH THEIR VIRTUES TEACH US TO COMBAT.

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Bayerle, B.G.

The Ecclesiastical year...

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